LONDON MISSION

VOLUME 78

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A Publication of:
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PRINTING
Public Affairs, Culture and Tourism (PACT) Department of The High Commission for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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INTRODUCING HER EXCELLENCY CHRISTINE KANGALOO PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Christine Carla Kangaloo was born in San Fernando on December 1, 1961, to Carlyle and Barbara Kangaloo. She is the fifth of their seven children.

Ms. Kangaloo attended the Grant Memorial Presbyterian Primary School; St. Joseph's Convent, San Fernando; and the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine and Cave Hill Campuses). She qualified with Honours in Law from the University of the West Indies in 1983. In 1985, she obtained her Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School and was admitted to the practice of law that year.

From 1985 to 1992 Ms. Kangaloo worked with her father, Carlyle, in his law practice.

In 1992, Ms. Kangaloo entered the service of the Judiciary as an Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court. She served in that capacity for 4 years, until 1996 when, following her father's untimely passing, she returned to private practice to wrap up his practice. In 1998, Ms. Kangaloo joined an established law firm in San Fernando.

Ms. Kangaloo commenced Parliamentary service in 2001 when, in that year, she was appointed an Opposition Senator. She was appointed Vice President of the Senate between January to August 2002; a Government Senator and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister between 2002 to 2005; Minister of Legal Affairs between 2005 to 2007; and Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education between 2007 and 2010. Ms. Kangaloo was also the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Pointe-a-Pierre between 2007 and 2010.

In 2015, Ms. Kangaloo was elected to the position of President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago – a position in which she served continuously until January 2023. As President of the Senate, Ms. Kangaloo acted as President

Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on thirty-three (33) occasions.

Ms. Kangaloo was the first person who served as Vice President of the Senate, to become the President of the Senate. Similarly, Ms. Kangaloo is also the first person who served as President of the Senate, to become the President-Elect of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

In Ms. Kangaloo's first Ministerial position, as Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Social Services Delivery, Ms. Kangaloo acquired an in-depth knowledge and awareness of the needs of vulnerable, disenfranchised, marginalized and disadvantaged persons, and sought to become a voice for these persons. In this Ministerial position, Ms. Kangaloo also interacted with Non-Governmental Organizations in delivering social services to these persons, and acquired in-depth knowledge of the infrastructure for the delivery of services to the public.

In Ms. Kangaloo's second Ministerial position, as Minister of Legal Affairs, she oversaw the operations of the Consumer Affairs Division which was responsible for consumer protection and advocacy, and the heightening of awareness by consumers of their rights. As Minister of Legal Affairs, Ms. Kangaloo sought to become a voice for consumers and to provide them with information (including prices of consumer items) to enable them to make informed choices and to empower them as consumers.

In Ms. Kangaloo's third Ministerial position, as Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, she was responsible for developing and implementing training programmes for the nation's youth and others. She particularly delighted in seeing the impact of these programmes on the lives of young people.

As an elected Member of Parliament, Ms. Kangaloo assisted in addressing the everyday needs of constituents (water, public transportation, schooling, medical care, employment) and helping the, solve their problems, In this role she acquired an appreciation for the unvarnished reality of daily living of her constituents and was an advocate for their upliftment and self-articulation.

By reason of her long and varied career in multiple incarnations of public service, Ms. Kangaloo has acquired an acute, singular and comprehensive appreciation of the system and the mechanics of government and public service, and of the needs of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Kangaloo has been married for twenty-four (24) years. She is a cancer-survivor.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Above: Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo inspects the Guard of Honour at the presidential inauguration, Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain. **Below:** Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo delivers her inaugural address. **Photo: Andrea De Silva**

The following is an excerpt from the Inaugural address by Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port Of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on March 20, 2023:

My Fellow Citizens…

It is March 20th 2023, and Trinidad and Tobago has just installed its Seventh President.

The ceremony by which we have done so is the result of the hard work and dedication of a large number of persons, to whom the country owes a tremendous debt this morning. And, the very first thing I should like to do, as I begin this term of the country's Seventh Presidency, is to say thank you to all the hands that have pulled together to make today's ceremony happen.

I would like to thank, especially, Her Excellency President Paula-Mae Weekes. As new Head of State, I am sure that I am constitutionally authorised to act on behalf of the entire country in thanking President Weekes for her noble and selfless service over the last five years, and I do so unreservedly.

But, outside of constitutional entitlements, and simply as a human being, I want to thank President Weekes for the kindness and the empathy that she has shown to me, especially over the past few weeks, in helping me to prepare, not just for today's ceremony, but also for the term of office that lies before me. Madame President, you have my deepest and my sincere gratitude.

Permit me, as well, to express my gratitude to the Electoral College for having elected me to serve as the country's Seventh Head of State. The feelings which have overwhelmed me since my election, are simply too much to put into words. All that I can do in return is to undertake to strain every muscle to vindicate the College's confidence in me, and I promise to do so.

When I was growing up, the number 7 was considered a lucky number. When teachers would hand out raffle sheets for us to take chances to raise funds for school, I would always select "7" as my number. Insofar as Presidents go, the Electoral College has selected me to be our country's number '7'. And, if, in time, history were to show my selection to have been a lucky one, let one thing be absolutely clear – that will only have been so, because of the 6 dedicated and devoted men and women who have preceded me in this office. My first request, as new Head of State, is that you therefore join me in expressing our country's collective thanks to these 6 outstanding sons and daughters.

And so, allow me, on behalf of a grateful and a beholden nation, to pay tribute today to His Excellency President Ellis Clarke – for his intellect and his courtliness. Allow

me, on your behalf, to pay tribute to His Excellency President Noor Hassanali – for his steadiness and his dignity. Allow me to pay tribute to His Excellency President Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson – for his pioneering and his gallantry. Allow me to pay tribute to His Excellency President George Maxwell Richards – for his erudition and his ingenuity. Allow me to pay tribute to His Excellency President Anthony Carmona – for his passionate love of country and his vitality. And allow me to pay tribute to Her Excellency President Paula-Mae Weekes – for the clearness of her convictions and for her fortitude.

By virtue of the efforts of these, our six previous Presidents, this country has written a glorious Presidential past. Today, we come together to start writing a further chapter in our Presidential history. Permit me now, to share with you a little of what I hope that future will look like.

One of the questions which invariably emerges whenever the occasion for the election of a President arises, is the role of the President in the first place. Through our collective fault, 47 years after our nation attained Republican status, significant portions of our citizenry remain unclear about precisely what the role of the President is.

During my term, I would like to continue the work begun by my predecessors in trying to demystify the role. I think that a good place to start is at the level of our primary school children.

One of our nation's founders spoke of the future of our nation being in our children's school bags; I believe that heightening awareness at the primary school level about the role of the President, will help promote a better understanding of the Presidency. I am aware of at least one primary school in South Trinidad – the San Fernando Girls Government Primary School, Standard 4 (Singh) – that has embarked on a project to heighten awareness about the role of the President. So long as that school's Principal permits, I should be very happy to meet with the students in Standard 4 (Singh) to discuss with them how they and their teachers might be able to help to lead and spread projects like theirs across the country.

Pictured (From Top): Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, the seventh President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, speaking with former President Justice Paula Mae Weekes at the presidential inauguration. **Photo: Andrea De Silva.** Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo with students from St. Maurus Montessori School of Arima. **Photo: otp.tt**

This is one of the things that I hope the Presidential future that we are starting to write today, will look like. A future in which there is a population that is better informed about the Presidency, and that is therefore better able to hold it to account.

Another means through which I believe the youth – and those who interact directly with them – can come to the country's aid, particularly in this season of rising crime, is through the model provided by the steelband movement in its preparations for Panorama.

For decades, there have been those who have been telling us that the discipline and the structure that the panyard brings into the lives of young people each year in the lead up to Carnival, combine to create one of the most effective youth delinquency prevention programmes available in the country. As President, I will be anxious to meet with and listen to those voices, as I will be to use the voice of my own Office to advocate for the adoption in our communities of youth programmes based on the panyard model – not just limited to specific periods in the year, but on a year-round basis.

This is another aspect of the Presidential future I envision – a future in which the Office of the President continues to collaborate with communities to explore, and advocate for, means by which our young people can be steered towards endeavours that are glorious and life-giving, and away from the allure of antisocial behaviours.

As our democracy and our society mature, there is an increasing demand for our leaders to become more and more accessible. The Office of President is no exception. There are certain levels of security that attend the Office of President – including as the President moves around in public spaces and, as many of us have experienced, on the nation's roads. There are also certain protocols that guide – and often limit – how citizens interact with the President. I ask the country to understand and to bear with these arrangements: in the main, they are necessary to preserve the dignity of the Office and the safety of its occupant. But they are not immutable, and they should not be inflexible. We must be careful not to make the mistake of elevating these arrangements, into ends in themselves. And we must avoid, at all costs, conscripting them into the dubious service of making the highest office in the land, also the most remote office in the land.

I therefore undertake, during my term in office, to build on the work of my predecessors and to examine ways of modernising the protocols that govern how citizens relate with the Office, and vice versa.

One of the ways in which I would like to see the Office of President made more and more accessible, is by having its facilities put to even greater use in hosting cultural, educational and artistic ventures – particularly among the youth. For example, I would like to see the Bandstand put to regular use as a platform for new and emerging young artistes. I would like to see the main ballroom and the grounds at President's House used to host displays, such as art exhibitions by primary and secondary school students.

To read the full speech, please visit: https://otp.tt/inaugural-address-by-her-excellency-christine-carla-kangaloo-seventh-president-of-the-republic-of-trinidad-and-tobago/

MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE DR. KEITH ROWLEY, PRIME MINISTER ON THE OCCASION OF EMANCIPATION DAY 2023

This message on African Emancipation Day 2023 holds the sincere wishes of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, my own family and myself, as Prime Minister.

Some citizens may choose to see today as just another of our national holidays, greeting it as a day of relaxation and relief, but in fact, it is a momentous opportunity for us all to celebrate, and truly appreciate the uniqueness of our land.

We are multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious -- a beautiful "patch work quilt" society, some people say. In recognising that diversity, we, as citizens, have been becoming more aware of our historical roots, and at the same time learning that our sociological make-up has forged extraordinary prospects for a workable, political consensus, if only we will let it.

We should also be reminded that this makeup has fault lines, which carry inherent dangers of entrenched cleavages and segmentation, with possibilities of ongoing contentions, and contrived, social conflicts -- which, experiences in other countries have shown -- could smoulder and ignite at any moment.

Hope, however, is one of the exceptional qualities that lodges within our collective Trinidad and Tobago personality. So today, when thousands of people of African descent take to the streets, they are asserting and glorifying their heritage, their self-realisation, grateful, too, that Trinidad and Tobago is not a torn nation, or failed state, but a real place, peopled by citizens, who every day celebrate its uniqueness, carrying their eternal hope for a better life for themselves, their families and for this nation.

In colourful attire today, we, the descendants, will be voicing to the world that we are the children, born out of the brutality of slavery, and reminding that the wrongs of that experience still echo, but we embrace hope and confidently look forward to a bright future.

Pictured: Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

We will be saying that we have been dealing with our history openly, directly, and honestly, but we cannot forget the whips on the backs of our ancestors.

The estimated figures of those who crossed the Middle Passage range from fourteen million to as high as forty million. The life of every captive meant, in varying ways, suffering and social death in a new world – first, being examined and auctioned off like an animal, then, survival on the plantation was a constant de-humanisation process -- a stripping away of identity, family ties, religion, names, language, dress, culture; overall, it attempted to strip every aspect of the enslaver's humanness. Yet we survived!

Over the centuries, our ancestors endured outright murders, child separation, beatings, rape, castrations, lynchings, and mutilation, with some body parts even being severed and sold as souvenirs. Yet we survived!

Finally, the enslaved were considered not fully human, just denuded, mindless objects, who created sugar solely for foreign tables, under a Massa, as overseer, with whip and gun at hand. Yet we survived!

The gateway in Medina in the Cape Coast province in Ghana, from which the stolen Africans departed Africa, was called "the door of no return." Yet we survived and returned to find our ancestral roots to join hands and find common causes with our modern-day brothers and sisters.

In the marches across the country today, you will see a people, coming out of the legacies of the torturous centuries of slavery, yet standing tall, proudly articulating their roots – a people saying they will not be marginalised, and are evolving in every human way.

They now see Africa, not through European eyes, as a dark continent, but as the cradle of human civilisation, citing the discoveries of its great empires. They talk of it glowingly, as the world's fastest developing economic region in the 21st century, having just overtaken Asia, and of its six of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world and of its minerals, critical and indispensable to the technologies of the 21st century green economies.

Today, recognising the pain of the Middle Passage, and the centuries of colonial brutality, I salute the African community, a people, who through grit and determination, is on the march, striving for further discovery and self-realisation, searching, and transforming themselves for the challenges of the 21st century.

Let us all reflect and educate ourselves as we celebrate African Emancipation Day 2023.

Pictured: Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister joined guest of honour, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, The Asantehene at the Lidj Yasu Omowale Village at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, to participate in Emancipation Day celebrations. (August 1 2023) **Photo: Facebook.com/OPMTT**

TRIBUTE TO FATHER JOHN METIVIER

Pictured: Canon John Metivier celebrating and participating in events hosted by the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago throughout the years.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our beloved Canon John Metivier, which occurred on Monday 28th November 2022

Canon John Metivier was born in Mayaro, Trinidad and Tobago on 16 October 1931. He was educated at St. Joseph Convent State School, South Oropouche and Naparima College, San Fernando. He worked in the Petroleum Industry, the Civil Service and as an assistant teacher at Fyzabad Intermediate School.

In 1956 Canon John Metivier entered the Community of the Resurrection, Codrington College, Barbados, became Deacon in 1960 at St. Michael's Cathedral Barbados and assistant to the Rector of St James Barbados. He was ordained a priest in 1961 at the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Trinidad and became Assistant Curate at St. Crispin's. He then spent time at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, California, worked with the USPG and in 1967 he came to the Cambridgeshire College of Arts.

In 1968, Canon Metivier became Rector of St. Mary's Parish, Tacarigua, in Trinidad and in 1977 became Rector of St. Andrew's, Tobago.

In 1978, Canon Metivier was made Priest in Charge of All Saints, Great Berkhamstead in the Diocese of St. Alban, United Kingdom. In 1982, he became Vicar of St. James, Goff's Oak, also in the St. Albans Diocese. In 1990 he became Vicar of St. Michael the Archangel, Wembley in the Diocese of London. In 1995, Canon John Metivier was appointed a Canon in Trinidad and Bishop's Commissary in the United Kingdom.

Canon John Metivier retired and in 2001 became Honorary Assistant Priest at St. Mary-the-Virgin, Kenton.

Canon John Metivier was one of the main celebrants at the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago's Interfaith Service to celebrate Trinidad and Tobago's Independence for many years. He offered guidance and direction and always had a huge input in the success of this celebration. His death has left a void in the hearts and mind of the High Commission's staff and the many nationals who knew and loved him.

High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul has spoken about the deep loss of such a dedicated and patriotic son of the soil and indicated that his shoes would be difficult to fill. We all miss him dearly.

Canon John Metivier's funeral took place on Friday 30 December 2022 at the St Michael's Church, Tokyngton, Wembley HA9 6SJ.

The High Commissioner and staff offers their deepest condolences to the family of the late Canon John Metivier. May His Soul Rest in Peace.

NATIONALS HONOURED AT THE HIGH COMMISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, LONDON

Pictured: (L-R) Ms. Marianne Cwynarski CBE, Ms. Anne Fridal, Mr. Keith Taylor, Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL, Mr. Leslie Charles MBE, known professionally as 'Billy Ocean', Lady Sue Hollick, Ms. Cherie Charles, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul and Mr. Ansel Wong CBE

On Friday 27 January 2023, the High Commission hosted an event for staff. In addition, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, used the event to honour a number of prominent nationals who have excelled in the United Kingdom.

One such national is Baroness Floella Benjamin. Baroness Benjamin, who is the recipient of The Order of Merit, which recognizes distinguished service in the armed forces, science, art, literature, and the promotion of culture. The Order of Merit, presented to Baroness Benjamin by His Majesty King Charles III, is restricted to a maximum of 24 living recipients from the Commonwealth, plus a limited number of honorary members.

Baroness Benjamin also celebrated 52 years in Children's television and is still appearing on Children's television across the world. She is best known for the iconic children's programmes Playschool and Play Away. In 2006 Baroness Benjamin was appointed the first black woman Chancellor of University of Exeter, a top UK University. She is perhaps the only woman in the UK to have been not only an actress in TV and film drama, a children's presenter, writer, author, independent producer, but a regulator and a policy maker in government as well. She started off her career in show business appearing on hit stage musicals before moving on to numerous dramas for both BBC and ITV.

As well are her stage film and television appearances, in 1987 she founded her own television production company and produced hundreds of children's programmes for all the major broadcasters. Her most recent programmes include Mama Mirabelle's Home Movies, Chuggington, Sarah Jane Adventures and is also a regular on CBeebies Bedtime Stories. She has written over 30 books including 'Coming to England'- which tells the Windrush story. The latest picture book edition of 'Coming to England' is now a number one best seller. The BBC film adaptation of the book won an RTS Award in 2004. She has also had experience as a regulator, she sat on the Ofcom Content Board for three years and was a member of the BBFC Advisory Board for several years and sat on the NFTS Board for 17 years. She was Chair of BAFTA - Television and created the Children's BAFTA Awards which are now in their 20th year.

In 2010 she became the first Trinidadian woman to become a Baroness in the House of Lords where she speaks on children's, diversity and media issues. She has received numerous awards including, an OBE for her contribution to children's broadcasting, a Special Lifetime BAFTA an RTS Award, a BKSTS Fellowship, an Honorary Fellowship of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the ACA-JM Barrie Award for her lasting legacy to children.

In 2020 Baroness Benjamin was made a Dame. She has just finished writing her autobiography 'What are You Doing Here?' which was published by Pan Macmillan in June 2022. She is the Chair of the Windrush Commemoration Committee which is charged with creating a National Windrush Monument. The unveiling took place at Waterloo Station on June 22 2022.

Baroness Benjamin was chosen by Her Majesty the Queen to receive the Order of Merit, one of Her Majesty's last wishes. She received the Order from King Charles III in November 2022.

Also honoured at the event was Leslie Sebastian Charles MBE, known professionally as Billy Ocean, one of the biggest recording stars with over thirty million record sales with Gold and Platinum records across the globe and a string of number ones including in the USA, Australia, Germany, Holland, and the UK.

In 2020 Billy Ocean was awarded an MBE for services to music. He also holds a Grammy award for best male R&B Vocal Performance, the Ivor Novello Award for International Achievement, two Billboard Music awards, the 2010 MOBO lifetime achievement award, and an Honorary Doctorate in music from Westminster University.

Billy Ocean's pop and soul anthems remain as popular now as they have always been. Hits such as 'Red Light Spells Danger', 'Love Really Hurts Without You', 'When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Goin' and the #Grammy Award-winning 'Caribbean Queen (No More Love On The Run)' attracts millions of streams and views.

Mr. Ocean got his first break when he signed to GTO records, and a first taste of chart success with the Motown-esque 'Love Really Hurts Without You', reaching number two in the UK charts and number twelve in the US.

Two top twenty singles 'Love on Delivery' and 'Stop Me...' followed before 'Red Light Spells Danger' became a smash in both the UK and the US. Billy moved to Jive records for the million selling American number one single 'Caribbean Queen (No More Love On The Run)', followed by 'Loverboy,' and 'Suddenly' double platinum, triple in Canada).

Mr. Ocean performed on the American leg of Live Aid in 1985. In 1986 he performed the songs 'When the Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going', the theme song to the Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner and Danny Devito movie 'Jewel of the Nile' with all three stars who joined him at Brixton Academy for the video.

The 'Love Zone' album, subsequently went straight to number two in the UK charts, staying in the top 40 for six months. In the US, there was a number one single with 'There'll be Sad Songs (To Make You Cry)'. More hits were to follow with the now classic 'Get Outta My Dreams; Get Into My Car', giving Billy yet another US number one hit.

Two more albums followed before Billy took an extended break to spend time with his family. He returned to the stage in 2007, with his daughter Cherie on backing vocals, for live dates in the UK, Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and the Caribbean.

He returned to the recording studio with new albums 'Because I Love You' (2008) and 'Here You Are' (2017). Most recently 'One World' (2020), spoke eloquently to a world in crisis amid the Covid19 pandemic.

Mr. Ocean is back on stage with UK festival appearances and headline dates across Europe and the US.

Former High Commissioner Ulric Cross's daughter Sue Woodford-Hollick OBE was also honoured at the event. Lady Sue Hollick was the founding Commissioning Editor of multicultural programmes for Channel 4. She has made a significant contribution to supporting inclusion in the UK, in broadcasting and the arts.

Lady Hollick started her career as an investigative journalist and award-winning current affairs producer for Granada Television, where she spent many years as a producer/director of the flagship series World in Action before moving to help launch Channel 4.

She was Chair of Arts Council England – London, and a member of the ACE National Council for many years. She is a former trustee and current advisor to Music for my Mind, a charity which aims to bring personalised music to dementia sufferers and their carers, and was the founding Chair of the Stuart Hall Foundation, established in memory of cultural theorist, Professor Stuart Hall. She is a Patron of the Runnymede Trust, One World Media, and the Stuart Hall Foundation and an Ambassador for Reprieve, the anti-death penalty organisation.

Lady Hollick has held many directorships in the arts and business, including serving on the boards of the Theatre Museum, Contemporary Dance Trust, Complicité Theatre Company, Tate Members, the Royal Commonwealth Society, English National Opera and Free Word. For seven years she was Chair of Index on Censorship, the international magazine for Free Speech. She is currently a trustee of the Hollick Family Foundation.

Other organisations Lady Hollick is associated with include AMREF, the African Medical Research Foundation, Africa's largest health charity, Leader's Quest and the Leaders Quest Foundation. In 1989 she co-founded, Bringing Up Baby, a day nursery group, which she successfully sold in 2019. Lady Hollick was awarded an OBE in 2011 for services to the arts.

Other prominent nationals on the day included Ansel Wong CBE, cultural activist, and Anne Fridal, Dramatic Soprano.

High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul expressed his delight at such an array of talented nationals who have all excelled in their chosen fields.

Pictured: Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL with artist Ms Karla Cornwall.

Pictured: 1) Ms. Beverley Awonaya addressing the staff and invited guests, **2)** His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, **3)** Ms Ann Fridal, **4)** Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL presented with a token by staff member Mr. Jackson Denni, **5)** Lady Sue Hollick presented a token by staff member Mr. Geoff Lowe, **6)** Mr. Leslie Charles MBE presented a token by staff member Mrs. Annette Donald-Wilmott, **7)** Mr. Leslie Charles MBE speaking with staff members **8)** Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL speaking with staff members, **9) (L-R)** Mr. Wendell Clement, Ms. Anne Fridal, Mr. Leslie Charles MBE, Ms. Nicola Cross and His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, **10)** Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London staff members with Lady Sue Hollick.

COURTESY CALL BY MINISTER OF SPORT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THE HONOURABLE SHAMFA CUDJOE

Minister of Sport and Community Development, the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe accompanied by Secretary Mrs. Annette Knott, Secretary-General of Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee (TTOC), and Ms Annie Hairsine, Project Lead for Commonwealth Youth Games, the Commonwealth Games Federation paid a courtesy call on High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul on Tuesday 31 January 2023.

The delegation held a meeting with High Commissioner Dhanpaul to discuss the Commonwealth Youth Games, strengthening the relationship between the diaspora and Trinidad and Tobago and other issues of mutual benefit to the twin-island republic.

His Excellency also led the delegation on a tour of the newly refurbished High Commission and introduced them to a few High Commission staff members.

Pictured: (L-R) His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, Mrs. Annette Knott, Secretary-General of Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee, Annie Hairsine, Project Lead for Commonwealth Youth Games from the Commonwealth Games Federation, and the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Sport and Community Development. **Photo: Facebook.com/sportcommdevtt**

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO WIN'S NEW SUPPORT FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH GAMES – TRINBAGO 2023

Pictured: The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Sport and Community Development, standing with (front row) Mr. Layne Robinson, Head of Social Policy Development - Commonwealth Secretariat, and the team at the meeting held at Marlborough House, London. **Photo: Facebook.com/sportcommdevtt**

Minister of Sport and Community Development, the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe met with Mr. Layne Robinson, Head of Social Policy Development, Commonwealth Secretariat, and his team to discuss opportunities for greater collaboration in preparation for the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Games was held in Trinidad and Tobago from August 4th. The discussions focussed on youth development initiatives for young persons of Trinidad and Tobago in celebration of Commonwealth's 2023 - Year of Youth.

Meetings were very fruitful, as the Commonwealth Secretariat agreed to provide technical support towards youth development, sport in school, and sport for peace initiatives being spearheaded by the Ministry of Sport and Community Development, along with the Commonwealth Youth Games steering committee, as part of the legacy projects for Trinbago 2023.

Some of the week's achievements included:

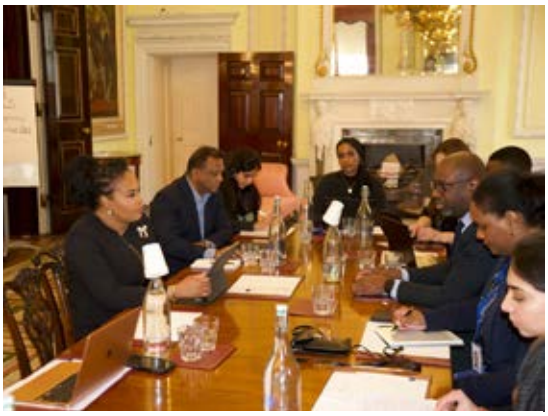
- Trinidad and Tobago obtained official membership in the Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sport (CABOS)
- Two hundred (200) digital training scholarships made available to young people of Trinidad and Tobago
- Support in the development of policy and legislation for safe guarding sport and positions of trust in sports
- Support for the development of a national Volunteerism programme
- Collaboration for the Youth Voice conference on 'Sport and Education - Hand in Hand'

- Opportunities for two (2) Trinidad and Tobago Sport for Peace champions to attend training as part of Commonwealth Youth Day in London March 2023

- Partnership for the community youth entrepreneurship initiative for Trinbago 2023 Games

These initiatives are beneficial to strengthening Trinidad and Tobago's resolve to utilise sport as a tools for youth development, social advancement and economic expansion.

These meetings formed part of Minister's Cudjoe's mission while representing Trinidad and Tobago at the Commonwealth's Launch of the 2023 -Year of Youth, where she highlighted the importance of sport in nurturing the youth of the Commonwealth, and welcomed the world to Trinidad and Tobago to host the 7th edition of the youth version Friendly Games in August 2023.



Pictured: The Trinidad and Tobago delegation lead by the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe held meetings at Marlborough House, London. **Photo: Facebook.com/sportcommdevtt**

CARICOM HEADS OF MISSION IN LONDON MEETING

On 1 March 2023, the Canada High Commission in the UK hosted a meeting between representatives of the CARICOM Caucus in London to discuss shared challenges and priorities. The gathering aimed to enhance collaboration on food security, climate action, and within the Commonwealth. The meeting served as a platform for both parties to unite their efforts to tackle pressing issues affecting their regions and strengthen their cooperation in mutual interests.

Pictured: CARICOM Heads of Mission Caucus meeting. **Photo courtesy High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom**

COMMONWEALTH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS MEET TO DISCUSS RESPONSES TO GLOBAL CRISES

Pictured: Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne at the 22nd Annual Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting. **Photo: thecommonwealth.org**

Foreign Ministers from across the Commonwealth met 15 March 2023, for the 22nd annual Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM). The meeting was held in person at the Commonwealth Secretariat headquarters, Marlborough House, in London.

The agenda focused on enhancing the resilience of Commonwealth countries, recognising the concurrent crises and challenges faced by many members such as climate change, the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and spiralling food and energy costs, which pose risks to peace and stability.

The meeting's agenda gave Ministers the opportunity to discuss governance structures and ways of working together to address challenges to the values and aspirations embodied in the Commonwealth Charter. Disruptions to food and energy security, the urgent threat of climate change, regional and localised conflict and high debt burdens affecting the lives of people across the Commonwealth were also discussed.

Ministers recognised that strong governance and accountability structures,

as well as other fundamental elements guaranteeing the rule of law are crucial to increasing countries' resilience and minimising the impacts of these challenges. Ministers noted ongoing work in the areas of governance, rule of law, good offices as well as debt management, with the latter being considered especially critical in the current global climate.

In addressing the broader theme of climate resilience, emphasis was placed on building on the outcomes of COP27. Ministers emphasised the importance of seeking ways of working together to unlock climate financing and to find innovative solutions to meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Ministers recalled the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter, adopted at the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and looked forward to its implementation.

Intra-Commonwealth trade was identified as a crucial advantage which could further harnessed. Intra-Commonwealth exports rebounded in 2021 to reach an all-time high of US$768 billion, up by almost $150 billion from 2020. In 2022, these exports were estimated to have surpassed $800 billion. Intra-Commonwealth exports were forecast to grow steadily over the next five years, surpassing US$1 trillion by 2026.

Ministers encouraged more ambitious action to realise the full potential of the Commonwealth Advantage, to achieve $2 trillion by 2030. Supporting countries in improving connectivity and maximising digital trade was identified as a key objective.

During the meeting Ministers also received an update on ongoing country situations in Guyana, Belize, Cyprus as well as the plight of the Rohingya in Bangladesh. They also congratulated the Secretariat on Commonwealth Day and heard of the Commonwealth Flag for Peace which was raised in Commonwealth countries around the world on Commonwealth Day.

Edited from https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-foreign-affairs-ministers-meet-discuss-responses-global-crises

Pictured: (Front row, 4th from left) Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, (Front row, 6th and 7th from left) the current Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, Honourable Dr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda and Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC with Foreign Ministers from across the Commonwealth. **Photo: thecommonwealth.org**

COMMONWEALTH DAY 2023 CELEBRATIONS AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

On Monday 13 March 2023, a special observance service held at Westminster Abbey in London to mark Commonwealth Day 2023.

The theme for Commonwealth Day 2023 was 'Forging a sustainable and peaceful common future', supporting the promotion of peace, prosperity, and sustainability, especially through climate action. This year also marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth Charter, which affirmed the Commonwealth's shared values of peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law and care for the environment, amongst others. In recognition of the tenth anniversary, nations across the Commonwealth raised the Commonwealth flag for peace.

High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul, Mrs. Anastasia Dhanpaul and Flagbearer Ms. Jada Marsh, a national high achiever, represented Trinidad and Tobago.

Pictured: Flagbearer Ms. Jada Marsh

Among the special guests at this year's Commonwealth Day service were their majesties The King and Queen Consort. During the service, His Majesty King Charles III delivered his inaugural speech as the Head of Commonwealth, emphasising the importance of the Commonwealth as a force for joint action on global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, youth opportunity and education.

Joining the dignitaries in attendance were The Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt. Hon Patricia Scotland, Foreign Ministers from across the world, faith leaders, youth advocates, athletes and school students.

The Commonwealth Day Service at the Abbey was followed by a reception hosted by the The King and The Queen Consort for members of the diplomatic and Commonwealth communities at Buckingham Palace. Their Majesties were joined by The Prince and Princess of Wales, The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.

Above: Baroness Floella Benjamin and Prince of Wales at the annual Commonwealth Day Reception at Buckingham Palace in London, England. **Photo: royal.uk**

COMMONWEALTH LEADERS PLEDGE CONTINUED UNITY AND TO EMPOWER YOUTH

Above: (Front Row, 7th from left) His Highness Tuimalealiifano Va'aleto'a Sualauvi II, the Head of State of Samoa - incoming Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, His Excellency Paul Kagame, The President of Rwanda, Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth, His Majesty King Charles III, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, **(Back Row, 7th from left)** His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul with leaders and representatives from Commonwealth member states. **Photo: thecommonwealth.org**

On Friday 5 May 2023, ahead of the Coronation, Leaders of Commonwealth member states met with His Majesty King Charles III at Marlborough House, the Headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

After their meeting with the King, leaders from the Commonwealth's 56 member states then met privately to discuss issues of mutual interest, including initiatives to support the empowerment of young people, as this year has been designated the Commonwealth Year of Youth.

The King has described the Commonwealth as a 'cornerstone' of his life, expressing his unwavering support for the values, people and countries of the Commonwealth. At their Heads of Government Meeting in 2018, Commonwealth Leaders decided that he would succeed Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Head of the Commonwealth, and he acceded to the role upon her death in September 2022.

Alongside the Leaders Meeting, the Commonwealth Secretariat also hosted a gathering of the spouses, partners and the invited guests of Commonwealth Heads of Government. The event, which was hosted by Mrs. Jeannette Kagame, the First lady of Rwanda, focused on the action needed to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer and tackle challenges impeding progress towards this goal across the Commonwealth. The spouses and partners in attendance pledged to champion advocacy and action in their respective countries.

Edited from https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-leaders-pledge-continued-unity-and-empower-youth

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S CULTURE AND ANGOSTURA RUM CELEBRATED AT THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE IN LONDON

Rum "the golden liquid" became the Master of London at the Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place in London. The best that Trinidad and Tobago and Angostura Limited had to offer were on display in the magnificent India and Pakistan Banqueting Hall.

The event called KALEIDOSCOPE: Rumology – a celebration of Caribbean Rum, Fine Food and Spirits was a collaboration among the High Commissions in London for Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

Also showcased at the event was Tobago Gold, a Caribbean Chocolate Rum Cream. The cocoa beans and various spices that are found in the cocoa tea inspired the drink.

Mr. Dexter Marchan on steelpan provided musical entertainment. There was a mix of music from the various islands represented on the night.

Above: Angustura drinks and Trinidad and Tobago promotional materials on display at the booth.

Mr. Marc Woods, celebrated mixologist lived up to expectations and worked his magic by producing the most delicious cocktails and rum punch.

A special thank you to Mr. Laurent Schun, CEO, Angostura Ltd. and his team as they pulled all stops to provide the rum showcased on the night.

The other rums from Barbados and St Kitts and Nevis were prominently displayed with guests partaking of all that were on offer. Barbados High Commissioner Milton Inniss in his speech indicated that Barbados is the oldest producer of Caribbean rum and of which he is proud. This met with huge chuckles from everyone.

Guests left the event happy and full of praise for the various rums that are distilled in the Caribbean and the unity that was shown among persons from the various islands. Caribbean unity and diversity were on full display.

Pictured: 1) Representatives from Skylark Spirits showcasing Tobago Gold – Chocolate Rum Cream, **2)** Representatives from Mount Gay Distilleries Limited (Barbados), **3)** Representatives from Brinley Gold Shipwreck Rum (St Kitts and Nevis), **4)** Mr. Marc Woods showcasing the versatility of Trinidad and Tobago rums from Angostura Limited, **5)** Mrs. Elsa G. Wilkin-Armbrister, Minister Counsellor, St. Kitts and Nevis High Commission, His Excellency Milton Inniss, High Commissioner for Barbados, Her Excellency Kisha Abba Grant, High Commissioner for Grenada and guest, **6)** Representatives from Doorly's Rum (Barbados).

7) His Excellency Dr. Kevin M. Isaac, High Commissioner for St. Kitts and Nevis (third from left) with guests, **8)** Mr. Manish Tiwari, CEO "Here And Now" Media Agency, Mr. George Phillips, Commercial Director, Wanis and Mr. Paul Harrison, Head of Community, Wanis, **9)** Ms. Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary and Ms. Vonetta Victor, Counsellor, High Commission for the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, **10) (L-R)** Ms Carol Valentine-Heath, Security Attaché**,** Mrs Michel Beute, Ms Beverley Toney, Mr. Lawson Lovell and Ms Dawn Elie-Forde, Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, **11, 16-18)** Specially invited guests enjoying the Rumology event, **12)** Mrs Beverley Awonaya and Ms Karla Cornwall, **13)** Mr. Nisha Karim and spouse Salina Hosien Karim, **14)** Mr. Dexter Marchan providing music on the steelpan, **15) (L-R)** Mr. Punch Cornwall, Mrs Gail Cornwall and guest.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, HIS EXCELLENCY DENNIS FRANCIS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On June 1, 2023, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, His Excellency Dennis Francis, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations was elected President of the General Assembly for the 78th session. The United Nations General Assembly 78th session commenced in September 2023 and will end in September 2024.

Ambassador Francis has had a career spanning approximately forty years in the Diplomatic Service of Trinidad and Tobago. He has served as Trinidad and Tobago's High Commissioner to Jamaica, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva, as well as Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization and to the UN Human Rights Council. He was also accredited concurrently to the U.N. Specialized Agencies in Vienna and Rome, besides having bilateral accreditation as Ambassador to Austria and Italy.

Above: His Excellency Dennis Francis, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nation, New York and President-Elect for the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

At Left: Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs offers congratulations to His Excellency Dennis Francis. **Photos: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs**

Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, who was in New York for the election emphasized when he addressed the General Assembly that *"The Government of Trinidad and Tobago holds the firm view that our nation's attributes will continue to add value, as one of our best and brightest will serve as the next President of the General Assembly. This is a position that we have never held before, and our campaign has underscored our unwavering commitment to the United Nations and to its founding principles."*

In his acceptance speech, Ambassador Francis said that, *"the pursuit of policies that support and encourage investing in people and therefore, in the creation of social capital, in the medium and long term, is arguably among the most effective strategies for promoting and achieving sustainable development."*

"It is education that brought me to this place, and ultimately to this podium, and I am so proud and gratified to have been born in a country, Trinidad and Tobago, that for almost 70 years has ascribed the highest value to education," the President-elect added.

Addressing Member States, Ambassador Francis said, *"It is my hope to bring forward with your help and support a renewed atmosphere of conciliation, cooperation and shared commitment in addressing the many challenges and seizing every opportunity, however nascent, before the General Assembly."*

H.E. Dennis Francis, President-elect of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, addresses a plenary meeting of the General Assembly

WATCH THE VIDEO | https://youtu.be/6ZMrz2CMVzk

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY

On 19 June, on the occasion of the International Day of Women In Diplomacy, the Women In Diplomacy Network, in partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), hosted a high-level Panel Discussion on the Evolving Role of Women In Diplomacy: Lessons Learned,

Pictured: Her Excellency Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to the United States address the attendees. **Photo: Women in Diplomacy London**

Challenges Ahead. The panel discussion included prominent female diplomats and High Commissioners.

The occasion offered a platform for esteemed women to exchange their perspectives and personal encounters. After the panel discussion, participants had the opportunity to explore collaboration in higher education and gain insight into the FCDO through a guided tour.

Ms. Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary and Mrs. Carol Valetine-Heath, Security Attaché Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, was among those in attendance.

Pictured: 1) Ms Liga Renkmane, Embassy of Latvia, Dame Veroka Sutherland, Dame Audrey Glover, HE Sophie Katsarava MBE, Ambassador for Georgia and Ms Racheal Midlen, FCDO, **2)** President of Women in Diplomacy H.E. Daniela-Laura Popescu, Ambassador of Romania to the United Kingdom, **3)** Various representatives raised points during the Question and Answer segment. **Photos: Women in Diplomacy London. 4)** H.E. Saida Muna Tasneem, High Commissioner for Bangladesh, H.E. Farah Faizal, High Commissioner for Maldives, H.E. Daniela-Laura Popescu, High Commissioner for Romania and Ms Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary.

TROOPING THE COLOUR FOR THE KING'S BIRTHDAY PARADE

Above: Ms Jenny G. Thompson, then Acting High Commissioner, High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago at the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, **Top right:** Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, his wife Akshata Murty (front row, third from left) attend Trooping of the Colour on Horse Guards Parade to celebrate King Charles III official birthday. **Photo: Simon Dawson | No. 10 Downing Street**

On Satruday 17 June, the official birthday of His Majesty King Charles III was celebrated for the first time, featuring the traditional Trooping the Colour ceremony at Horse Guards in London. As Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiments of Household Division, King Charles III holds a significant role in the event, with each Regiment usually led by a member of the Royal Family or a senior officer. This ceremony has been a staple in British tradition for more than 260 years, and 2023 marked King Charles III's inaugural Trooping of the Colour as Sovereign. The parade involved over 1,400 soldiers, 200 horses, and 400 musicians, showcasing military precision and horsemanship. The event concluded with an impressive RAF fly-past, with the Royal Family observing from Buckingham Palace balcony.

Ms. Jenny G. Thompson, then Acting High Commissioner, Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, and Mrs. Anatasia Geofory-Dhanpaul were among those in attendance.

When is King Charles III's birthday?

King Charles III's actual birthday is 14 November - he was born on 14 November 1948 - but the Sovereign's birthday (or HM The King's official birthday) is celebrated on another date, usually in the summer months.

NATIONALS MEETING – JULY

On Wednesday 5 July, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission in London hosted its Virtual Nationals Meeting (UK). High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul, Chair of the Meeting, delivered the Welcome Address.

A presentation by Ms. Alicia Acres-Youksee, based in the Immigration Division, Port of Spain, provided details on immigration matters and addressed passport and other related issues. Another presentation by the Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company Limited (fashionTT) focused on their upcoming fashion trade show in London. Following this, Ms. Elizabeth Montano, author of 'King of Soca,' provided insights into the career of her son, Machel Montano.

The Question and Answer segment addressed passport queries and consular matters. High Commissioner Dhanpaul concluded the meeting by inviting all nationals to attend the Interfaith Service at St. Peter's Eaton Square Church, celebrating Trinidad and Tobago's 61st anniversary of Independence.

To watch the recording of the Nationals' Meeting - 5th July 2023, please visit: bit.ly/tthc-nationalsmeeting-july2023

1) Ms. Aisha Stewart, Project Lead at Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company (FashionTT), **2)** Ms. Elizabeth Montano addresses the Nationals' Meeting virtually, **3&5,6)** A cross section of the nationals who raised points during the Nationals' Meeting Question and Answer segment, **7)** Mr. Rudolph Walker OBE, **4)** Mrs. Alicia Acres-Youksee responds to question raised by a national who attended the Nationals' Meeting virtually, **8)** Mrs. Carol Valentine-Heath, Security Attaché assisting nationals with their queries.

COURTESY CALL BY SENIOR ADVISOR AND SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AND SENIOR ADVISOR AT THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

On 13 July 2023, High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul met with a delegation from the Ministry of Transport, Singapore, with the intent of strengthening transport cooperation between both nations across all transportation sectors.

The delegation from Singapore, which was led by His Excellency Yap Ong Heng, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore and Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Transport engaged in an extensive discussion with High Commissioner Dhanpaul. The topics of conversation re-volved around bilateral maritime relations and other pertinent issues in the field of transportation development.

Top left: High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul with Mr. Yap Ong Heng, Senior Advisor and Special Envoy of the Coordinating Minister and Minister of Transport, **Top right:** High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul spoke to Mr. Yap Ong Heng and the delegation about the new president and current Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and, **At right:** Additionally, High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul touched upon Trinidad and Tobago's art and culture.

COURTESY CALL BY THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DELEGATION

On July 10 2023, the members of the delegation from the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago paid a courtesy call on High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul. The delegation was led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George. The delegation was on an official visit to the Parliament of the United Kingdom in Westminster, London. The other members of the delegation are Senator Dr. Muhammad Yunus Ibrahim, Vice-President of the Senate, Senator Dr. Paul Richards, Independent Senator, and Mr. Brian Caesar, Clerk of the Senate.

Pictured: His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, Speaker of the House of Representatives the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George, Vice-President of the Senate, and Senator Dr. Paul Richards and Senator Dr. Muhammad Yunus Ibrahim

DR. NATALIE JOHNSON, BREAST AND ONCOPLASTIC SURGEON BEHIND UK'S FIRST SOFTIE FOR BLACK AND BROWN WOMEN

Dr. Natalie Johnson, a Trinbagonian doctor based in the UK, has made a significant impact on the lives of women of colour who have undergone mastectomies due to breast cancer. Dr. Johnson, a Breast and Oncoplastic Surgeon at The Royal Marsden, recognized the need for soft prosthetics in realistic skin tones to help these women dress more confidently. This innovation has levelled the playing field for breast cancer survivors, providing them with a range of options to feel comfortable and regain their self-esteem.

Above: Dr. Natalie Johnson and nurse Sarah Adomah pose with softies designed for black and brown women. **Photo: Dominick Tyler.**

Born and raised in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Dr. Johnson attended Sacred Heart Girls' Roman Catholic School and Holy Name Convent before pursuing her medical degree at the University of the West Indies. In 2002, she moved to the UK to further her surgical training. Prior to her departure, Dr. Johnson discovered that Trinidad and Tobago had only one female surgeon, who was not native to the island. This realization fuelled her determination to become a surgeon and make a difference in her home country.

The softies for black and brown women, as they are called, are lightweight fabric prostheses provided to breast cancer patients after mastectomy surgery. These softies serve as padding and help survivors achieve a symmetrical look during the recovery phase. Some women use them temporarily before undergoing reconstructive surgery, while others use them permanently. Dr. Johnson and her team recognised the importance of inclusivity and patient-centered care, leading them to collaborate with Ms Sarah Adomah, a breast clinical nurse specialist, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, Nubian Skin (a lingerie brand specializing in skin-tone products), and The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity to develop softies for women of colour.

Dr. Johnson emphasized the psychological impact of the softies, stating that every patient should receive the same care and feel that their needs are catered to. She stressed that providing a softie that doesn't match a woman's skin tone can make her feel abnormal rather than normal. The Royal Marsden Hospital, renowned for its cancer care, supported Dr. Johnson's vision, recognizing the importance of meeting patients' specific needs.

Dr. Johnson's ultimate goal is to make these softies available to women around the world, including Trinidad and Tobago. She aims to work with governments and charitable institutions to ensure that every woman has access to this important aspect of their care.

Pictured: His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul and Dr. Natalie Johnson

In addition to her ground breaking work, Dr. Johnson also had a message for young girls and individuals considering career changes. Drawing from her own experience, she encouraged young girls to pursue their dreams and seize opportunities that come their way. She emphasized seeking guidance and support from others and stressed the importance of following one's passion. Dr. Johnson also urged individuals to consider career changes and challenged societal perceptions of success, emphasizing that there are numerous fulfilling and successful career paths beyond traditional professions.

Dr. Natalie Johnson's innovative work in providing soft prosthetics in realistic skin tones has transformed the lives of women of colour who have undergone mastectomies. Her patient-centered approach and dedication to inclusivity serve as an inspiration for aspiring medical professionals and individuals seeking career changes. By addressing the specific needs of patients and promoting diversity in the medical field, Dr. Johnson has made a remarkable impact on breast cancer survivors, fostering confidence, and empowering women worldwide.

Edited from https://tt.loopnews.com/content/trini-born-surgeon-behind-uks-first-softie-black-and-brown-women

LIFE-SIZE SCULPTURE UNVEILED IN TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY THEATRE DIRECTOR DR. GERALDINE CONNOR

Above: Ms. Lara Rose (third from left), and Dr. Alan Dunn (fourth from left), Reader and Director of Studies alongside staff members of the Leeds Beckett University, **Top right:** the life size sculpture of Dr. Geraldine Connor. **Photo: Leeds Beckett University**

Ms. Lara Rose's life-size sculpture of Dr. Geraldine Connor was viewed in the Leeds School of Arts building and was considered to be one of the only statues of a black person on public display in the city.

The two enjoyed a close relationship, with Lara starring in Dr. Connor's Carnival Messiah production and later selecting a PhD topic based on the director's advice to explore West African Yoruba culture.

Lara said: "In my first experience of Dr. Geraldine Connor's Carnival Messiah in 2002, the seeds were sown for further inquiry into a once forbidden Yoruba culture and language.

"Following numerous conversations with Geraldine, and on her discovery of my Yoruba heritage, she said to me, 'child you need to tell your story, your Yoruba story in your art.' And now, Geraldine – Mama God - is blue to celebrate joy, like an elaborate blue ocean."

A multi-talented performer, writer, director and educator, Dr. Connor balanced her work in the performing arts industry with a Senior Lecturer role at the University of Leeds.

She sought to build cultural and educational links between the UK and Trinidadand Tobago, the country of her parents, until her death in October 2011 at the age of 59.

Dr. Alan Dunn, Reader and Ms. Lara's Director of Studies from Leeds Beckett University, said: "Lara has studied sculpture here at Leeds Beckett University since joining our postgraduate APD course, followed by two years on our Masters programme and now a six-year PhD by Practice.

"In itself, that is a remarkable story and the manner in which her sculpture shifted during lockdown from smaller assemblages to this incredibly bold and important work, took us all by surprise."

Singer Corinne Bailey Rae, Ms. Selina McGonagle, Director of the Geraldine Connor Foundation, and Dr. Emily Zobel Marshall, LBU academic and co-chair of the David Oluwale Memorial Association, were among the notable individuals present at the unveiling ceremony.

The sculpture was on display in the foyer of the Leeds School of Arts building.

Edited from https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/news/2022/11/phd-students-landmark-sculpture-installed-at-leeds-beckett-university/

Above: Dr. Anthony Joseph. **Photo: Naomi Woddis**

ANTHONY JOSEPH WINS TS ELIOT PRIZE FOR 'LUMINOUS' POETRY COLLECTION

Dr. Anthony Joseph has been awarded the TS Eliot prize for his collection Sonnets for Albert, which the judges described as "luminous." This year's competition received a record-breaking 201 submissions, and Joseph takes home the £25,000 poetry prize.

The panel of judges, led by Chair Ms. Jean Sprackland, included Ms. Hannah Lowe, the winner of the 2021 Costa Book of the Year, and Mr. Roger Robinson, the winner of the 2019 TS Eliot prize. They stated that each of the shortlisted books "spoke powerfully to us in its own distinctive voice."

Ultimately, they selected Sonnets for Albert as the winner, praising its luminous quality and its celebration of humanity's contradictions while breathing new life into the enduring form of the sonnet.

Sonnets for Albert, previously shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Collection,

is an autobiographical work that explores the impact of growing up with an absent father.

Aside from his accomplishments as a poet, Dr. Joseph is also a novelist, musician, and lecturer in creative writing at King's College London. He has written five poetry collections, three novels, and released eight critically acclaimed albums. His novel Kitch: A Fictional Biography of a Calypso Icon was shortlisted for the Republic of Consciousness Prize and the Royal Society of Literature's Encore Award, and longlisted for the 2019 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature.

Joseph was chosen as the winner from a shortlist of 10 collections. The others shortlisted included five debut poetry collections: Quiet by Victoria Adukwei Bulley, Slide by Mark Pajak, bandit country by James Conor Patterson, The Room Between Us by Denise Saul and Manorism by Yomi Sode.

Edited from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/jan/16/anthony-joseph-wins-ts-eliot-prize-for-luminous-poetry-collection

WATCH THE VIDEO youtu.be/CUUPG391hxg

PUBLISHER, POET, AND ESSAYIST JOHN LA ROSE HONORED WITH RENAMING OF ROAD IN TOTTENHAM

At left: Mr. Renaldo La Rose (pictured far left) with members of the Tottenham community on La Rose Lane. **Above:** Potrait of Mr. John La Rose. **Below:** In 1976, Mr. John La Rose unveils the latest book by Cuban writer Nicolas Guillen at New Beacon Books. **Photos: New Beacon Books**

The late publisher, poet and essayist John La Rose, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago has been honoured with a new street name in south Tottenham. Mr. La Rose, a former resident of Haringey, was a prominent advocate for social justice and was recognised as such by other Black authors, artists and thinkers. He played a key role in founding New Beacon Books in Stroud Green, London and later the Caribbean Artists' Movement.

The decision to rename the street as La Rose Lane was made in response to concerns raised by residents that Black Boy Lane, had racist connotations and was a source of ongoing hurt for Black people. The decision followed a thorough process of consultation with residents.

House numbers and postcodes will not be affected, and organisations including the Royal Mail will continue to recognise the old name of the street for a transitional period of one year to minimise inconvenience for residents. During the transitional period, street signs will continue to include the former street name.

Councillor Peray Ahmet, Leader of Haringey Council, said: *"I'm delighted that we're able to pay tribute to John La Rose with a new street name. John made such a huge contribution to Black life both here in Haringey and across the UK and played an important role in gaining recognition for Black authors and artists, as well as championing inclusive education."*

Mr. Renaldo La Rose, grandson of John La Rose, said: *"John's family are really proud that John's life and work is to be recognised by having a road named after him. John's work was of national and international significance but much of it started here in Haringey. We hope that through having his name memorialised in this way we will bring the message of his work – the urgent need for race equality and justice – to a new audience."*

Edited from https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/road-renamed-honour-john-la-rose

WWII RAF VETERAN PRINCE ALBERT JACOB PRESENTED WITH WAR MEDALS, RAF COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE MEDAL, AND VETERAN'S BADGE

Pictured: Mr. Prince Albert Jacob with his War Medal and Commemorative Service Medal.

Photo: BBC News

Mr. Prince Albert Jacob, also known as Jake, is a 97-year-old veteran from Trinidad and Tobago who joined the RAF (Royal Air Force) in 1943 during World War II. His service involved repairing planes and being stationed at various locations, including Kirkham, Burtonwood, and Carlisle, with assignments that included ordering aircraft parts.

After the war, Mr. Jacob was informed that he and his fellow servicemen would be eligible to receive medals for their contributions, but he never received any information about how to apply for them. Years passed without any news, until one day, a neighbour offered to help him complete the necessary paperwork to apply for his medals.

With his neighbour's assistance, Mr. Jacob finally applied for his well-deserved recognition. In a heartwarming turn of events, he received the War Medal, RAF Commemorative Service Medal, and a veteran's badge. Proud of his service and the recognition of his contributions, Mr. Jacob expressed his joy in receiving the medals and the honor of wearing them.

Upon being presented with the medals he had waited so many years for, Mr. Jacob recalled the moment as a pleasant surprise. His neighbour handed him the package, and when he opened it, he was thrilled to find the long-awaited medals inside. His dedication to his duty and country during the war was rewarded with this belated but meaningful acknowledgment of his service.

Throughout his journey, Mr. Jacob felt a deep sense of pride in serving King and country during the war. His commitment to repairing planes and fulfilling his duties as a member of the RAF remains a significant source of honor for him.

Despite the decades-long wait, Mr. Prince Albert Jacob's perseverance paid off, and he can now proudly wear his well-deserved medals as a testament to his service and dedication during World War II. His story serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by countless servicemen and women during that era.

Edited from https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-64649631

Above: Representing Team GB, Mr. Jacob stood on the podium at the 1950 Maccabiah Games in Israel. **Photo: Birmingham Live**

TWO CULTURAL ICONS ARE JOINS THE WINDRUSH CARIBBEAN FILM FESTIVAL TEAM

On February 21, 2023, Mr. Ansel Wong CBE, a distinguished cultural historian and activist from Trinidad and Tobago, has been appointed a Director of the Windrush Caribbean Film Festival CIC (WCFF), a pivotal force behind the festival's presence in the UK since 2020. Wong, hailing from Trinidad and based in the UK since the 1960s, is celebrated for his leadership in social change and racial justice efforts, notably on the Windrush Commemoration Committee and as former Chair of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust.

Mr. Emmanuel Anyiam-Osigwe MBE, Founder of the British Urban Film Festival, joins WCFF as Artistic Director. Emmanuel's extensive contributions to the Black and Minority Ethnic Film Industry have earned him an MBE, making him a valuable addition to the festival's team.

WCFF, established in 2020, serves as a platform to educate and engage audiences nationwide about the significant contributions of the Windrush generation. Through screenings, talkbacks, interviews, and workshops, the festival fosters dialogue that connects the Windrush generation's experiences with contemporary perspectives. Mr. Ansel Wong and Mr. Emmanuel Anyiam-Osigwe's involvement strengthens WCFF's mission to celebrate and preserve the enduring legacy of the Windrush generation in the UK.

Edited from https://www.windrushfilmfestival.com/wcff-welcomes-emmanuel-anyiam-osigwe-mbe-and-ansel-wong-cbe/

ALTHEA MCNISH HONOURED WITH BLUE PLAQUE

NUBIAN JAK COMMUNITY TRUST
ALTHEA
McNISH
1924 - 2020
Pioneering Designer of International Textiles, Murals and Wallpapers, and Prolific Painter
Lived and had her Studio Here for Over 60 Years
HARINGEY COUNCIL LONDON UNSEEN

Above: Nubian Jak Community Trust Blue plaque unveiled for Ms. Althea McNish, **Photo: Haringey Council**
At right: Althea McNish, **Photo: Derek Tamea**

A blue plaque for Ms. Althea McNish was unveiled at a ceremony held on Monday 15 May, coinciding with the 99th anniversary of her birth. She achieved international recognition for her work, designing for prestigious companies like Liberty's and Hull Traders. Her pieces are part of the V&A collections, and she had close ties to the Caribbean Artists' Movement. Ms McNish, born in Trinidad and Tobago, lived and worked for over 60 years on West Green Road in Tottenham, a street renowned for being the home of many pioneering businesses, entrepreneurs and artists of the Windrush Generation.

Councillor Peray Ahmet, The Leader of Haringey Council, expressed pride in Ms Althea McNish's achievements in contemporary textiles and celebrated her with a blue plaque on West Green Road, where she lived for many years. As Windrush Day approaches, marking 75 years since the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks, Ms McNish and other members of the Windrush Generation are acknowledged for their significant contributions to Haringey and the UK.

Dr. Jak Beula, Founder of Nubian Jak Community Trust expressed delight in honoring Althea McNish as the 84th recipient of a Nubian Jak London Blue plaque. Her impact on London has been profound and the plaque is expected to raise awareness of her legacy for future generations.

Ms Justine Simons OBE, London's Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries highlighted the importance of celebrating and commemorating the diverse communities that make up London. Ms Althea McNish's contribution to the fabric and textile industry is highly regarded, and her works will continue to inspire artists and creatives in the city for years to come. The effort to raise awareness of London's heritage and history aims to create a fairer and more equitable city for all Londoners.

His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul and Professor Gus John were among the speakers at the unveiling ceremony, which was attended by Ms Althea McNish's family, friends, neighbors, and members of the community.

The installation of the plaque was made possible by the work of the Nubian Jak Community Trust, and funding from London Unseen – part of the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm. The production and installation of the plaque was supported by the staff and students of Earlsmead Primary School and Haringey Council – marking the start of a longer, local focus on Ms McNish's work leading up to a celebration of her centenary in 2024.

Edited from https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/late-tottenham-textile-artist-althea-mcnish-honoured-blue-plaque-west-green-road

Middle: Haringey residents gather to honour Ms. Althea McNish with a blue plaque unveiling at her former home on West Green Road**. Above:** Dr. Jak Beula, Founder of Nubian Jak Community Trust, **At left:** Councillor Gina Adamou, Mayor of Haringey, is Ms Jacqueline Morrison, Project Manager at Nubian Jak Community Trust and His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul. **Photos: Haringey Council.**

BARONESS FLOELLA BENJAMIN PERFORMS DISTINGUISHED ROLE AT HISTORIC CORONATION

Pictured: Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE BL (pictured right), carrying the The Sovereign's Sceptre with Dove alongside Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover and the Bishop in Canterbury who presented the then HM Queen Consort Camilla with The Queen Consort's Rod at the Coronation during the coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey.
Photo: Floella Benjamin

In the historic coronation ceremony of HM King Charles III and the then HM Queen Consort, several distinguished individuals were selected for key roles, one of them being the former TV presenter, Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL. Baroness Benjamin, known for her work in promoting human rights and diversity, was honoured with the task of carrying HM King Charles's sceptre with a dove, a symbol of spirituality, equity and mercy. Her selection represented an embrace of diversity and inclusion.

The procession through Westminster Abbey was graced by other prominent figures as well. General Sir Gordon Messenger, the governor of the Tower of London, had the honour of bearing the St .Edward's crown, which would be used to crown HM King Charles III. Meanwhile, the Duke of Wellington carried HM Queen Consort's crown.

Notable participants in the coronation included Elizabeth Manningham-Buller, carrying the St. Edward's Staff, and Helena Kennedy, entrusted with the queen consort's rod. Penny Mordaunt carried the King's sword of state. Francis Dymoke, the 34th generation of the Scrivelsby estate, became the King's champion, while Petty Officer Amy Taylor broke barriers as the first woman to bear the jeweled sword of offering, representing service personnel.

The ceremony also saw the participation of faith leaders and representatives leading the first procession into Westminster Abbey. Following them were representatives from the king's realms, each carrying their respective realm's flags, accompanied by governors-general and prime ministers.

Before the coronation on 2 May, King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla visited Westminster Hall for a reception, where they met members from both Houses of Parliament, including speakers, senior leaders, and individuals with shared interests in areas like the environment, education and the arts.

The event marked a momentous occasion in British history, celebrating continuity and tradition while embracing diversity and inclusivity, as exemplified by Baroness Floella Benjamin's symbolic role in carrying the sovereign's sceptre with dove.

Edited from https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/apr/27/ex-tv-presenter-floella-benjamin-among-coronation-procession

Pictured: (L-R) Dame Elizabeth Anionwu carrying the Orb alongside General Sir Gordon Messenger, the Governor of HM Tower of London carrying St Edward's Crown, and Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL, carrying the The Sovereign's Sceptre with Dove during the coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey **Photo: PA Images**

HOUSE OF COMMONS DIRECTOR GENERAL HAILS TRINBAGONIAN ROOTS

submitted by **UKPARLIAMENT.SHORTHANDSTORIES.COM**

Pictured: Mrs Marianne Cwynarski (nee Juanette) CBE, Director General of Operations in the House of Commons.
Photo: ©UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor

The new Director General of the UK House of Commons was described as 'an inspiration' to the people of Trinidad and Tobago by the country's High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul.

His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul told Mrs Marianne Cwynarski CBE, whose parents hail from the dual-island nation in the Caribbean, that her achievement 'was a source of great pride to him'.

He made the comments during his debut meeting with Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, who appointed Marianne as DG, following her success in keeping the House operational during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Her efforts were also recognised in the 2021 New Year's Honours, when HRH the Prince of Wales awarded her the CBE.

Mrs Cwynarski said no-one was prouder of her success in becoming the operational leader for the House Service than her family.

'When I told my relatives over here at a party recently that I was DG, the place erupted,' she said. 'Someone from Trinidad is director general of the House of Commons?! They are incredibly proud.

'It's a lovely reminder that you can come from a very small island and have opportunities like this in your life.

'Never in my wildest dreams have I ever thought I might end up walking the corridors of power. It seems other worldly – but that is why my parents came here: for the opportunities.'

Mrs Cwynarski's parents Molly Mustapha and Joe Juanette moved from Port of Spain to Maida Vale, West London, in the late 1950s, on a scheme to attract workers from the Caribbean.

'My Dad was excited by the prospect of relocating to London in the 1950s and 60s. They absolutely loved London life,' she said.

Pictured: (L-R) High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul, Mrs Marianne Cwynarski (nee Juanette) CBE, Director General of Operations in the House of Commons and Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons. **Photo: ©UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor**

'But I remember the sadness that they felt, particularly my Mum, about the family that they left behind.

'Even though my Dad was a graphic artist and photographer who had photos published in the Trinidad Tribune - he was sponsored by the Post Office to become a postman,' she said.

'But the job wasn't for him, and he quickly went back to the creative world of art and graphics.'

While she was born in Park Royal, Middlesex, Marianne says her upbringing was 'warm, loving and with strong links to home'.

'One of the biggest memories I had was the excitement of having a Trinidadian relative arriving with food in their suitcase,' she said.

'It was at a time when you couldn't get mangoes, tamarind balls, kurma, curry powder, super-hot pepper sauce and even coconut oil for our bodies and hair.'

Marianne said her family-trips home to Trinidad were 'mind-blowing'.

'It really is like paradise, with places like Mayaro Beach, Pigeon Point and the mangroves – and such incredible wildlife, like Humming Birds, Scarlet Ibis and poisonous snakes,' she said.

'As a child, I felt like I was related to the whole island, because my Mum's family – the Mustaphas - were so well known. I can remember feeling like a celebrity everywhere I went – it was lovely.'

Now Marianne, who with husband Paul has two children, is a well-known face at the House of Commons, where she has worked for more than 20 years and oversees 3,000 people.

His Excellency Mr. Dhanpaul said: 'Your story is an incredible one and is an inspiration to many people in Trinidad and Tobago, and the diaspora who have made their homes in the UK.

The Mission wishes to invite submissions from the Diaspora on various topics which may include short stories, poems and other interesting tidbits on life here and back home for possible inclusion in the newsletter.

Email: **hclondonPACT@foreign.gov.tt**

CHÉ LEONARD SELECTED AS CARIBBEAN CULTURAL INFLUENCER

written by **DUNSTAN CREAVALLE | SOCA NEWS**

Soca DJ and producer Mr. Ché Leonard is one of several people featured in Citizen UK: Croydon's Caribbean Influencers. The exhibition, produced in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery, explores the stories of Croydon residents who have shaped the borough through their Caribbean roots but are often uncredited or under-represented. It creatively tells these inspiring stories using archive material, spoken word by Croydon Poet Laureate Shaniqua Benjamin and portraits by Artist Kyam (Camara Pinnock), giving a snapshot of the local histories uncovered.

Pictured: Mr. Ché Leonard

Photo: Culture Croydon

With great pride, Mr. Leonard told Soca News: *"I'm extremely delighted to have been selected and it is such an honour to be featured among other exceptional individuals of Caribbean heritage who have all made significant cultural contributions to Britain.*

"It's humbling that my personal journey over three decades has been captured in a full-length interview, visual installation and short poem. I've been truly proud to showcase my country of birth, Trinidad & Tobago, and the wider Caribbean. Even more exciting is the news that my recording will be shown at the National Portrait Gallery and housed permanently in their national archives. That's a big deal for a little boy from San Fernando, Trinidad!

"I am very thankful to have been selected for this recognition and wish to dedicate it to my parents, Winston and Janice Leonard (both deceased), who I know are always watching over me. May they continue to sleep in eternal peace."

The free exhibition took place at the Atrium, Croydon Museum, until 18 June. Subsequently, the recordings of Mr. Leonard and others will be exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery and permanently preserved in the National Archives. For more information visit culturecroydon.com.

PROFESSOR CALVIN MOORLEY RECEIVED THE RCN FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Professor Calvin Moorley recently received the RCN Fellowship Award. Professor Calvin Moorley is a Mary Seacole scholar whose work on social justice, racism, and inequality positions him as an expert in his field.

The (RCN) Royal College of Nursing in London recognises innovative individuals who have made an exceptional commitment to advancing the science and practice of nursing and the improvement of health and patient care, therefore Professor Calvin Moorley's work was recognised and he was awarded the RCN Fellowship Award. It can be described as one of the highest accolade that the RCN can award any member.

Professor Calvin Moorley was born in Cushe Village, Rio Claro and attended the Cushe Government Primary School and then North Eastern College in Sangre Grande.

Pictured: (L-R) Professor Laura Serrant OBE, Ruth Oshikanlu MBE and Professor Carl Moorley, **Photo: Royal College of Nursing**

SUZANN MCLEAN AWARDED MBE IN QUEEN'S NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST

submitted by **THEATRE PECKHAM**

Pictured: Mrs. Suzan McLean MBE.

Photo: John Yabrifa

Mrs Suzann McLean, CEO and Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham, has been awarded an MBE in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List for her services to the arts and marginalised young people. Suzann has been recognised for her outstanding contribution to theatre and television as an actor and director, as well as her commitment to widening access for young people from marginalised backgrounds to participate and lead in the arts.

With a career spanning over 25 years she has been dedicated to creating opportunities for young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to develop their skills and pursue careers in the arts.

In 2004, Suzann founded Young and Talented, a successful programme that nurtures and develops young people for stage, screen and life. The programme has helped many young people achieve success in the industry. In 2018 she was appointed CEO and Artistic Director of Theatre Peckham which also runs a flagship Academy for performing arts and technical theatre.

Commenting on the award, Suzann McLean said: *"Being recognised in this way is uplifting and inspiring. It is an honour that I share with the young people who have participated in the programmes that I have provided over the years. This award is dedicated to them, and I will continue to create opportunities for them to shine."*

About Theatre Peckham, McLean adds: *"My vision for a more inclusive and representative arts sector is one that we all share at Theatre Peckham. This award is recognition of the hard work of the entire team who are dedicated to creating opportunities for participation in the arts. I am proud to be part of a community that celebrates diversity and empowers young people."*

Born in London, Ms. McLean grew up in a household with Trinbagonian heritage, as her father migrated from Trinidad and Tobago to the United Kingdom.

ANNDELORIS CHACON AWARDED BEM IN KING'S NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST

Pictured: Ms Anndeloris Chacon BEM. **Photo courtesy Anndeloris Chacon**

In recognition for her "Services to Charity and to the community in Bristol", Ms Anndeloris Chacon, a highly accomplished Trinidad and Tobago professional, was awarded the prestigious British Empire Medal (BEM) in 2023 for her exceptional contributions to the local community. Her dedication to healthcare and community support has made a significant impact throughout her remarkable career. Ms Chacon played a pivotal role in establishing the cardiac catheterization laboratory and the introduction of open-heart surgery in Trinidad and Tobago. Her tenure as the Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Clinical Coordinator showcased her commitment to improving care of those affected by these conditions.

As the CEO of Bristol Black Carers since 2015, Ms Chacon successfully revitalized the charity, ensuring vital support for carers and their families in providing services to meet their needs. Her advocacy work and representation of underrepresented voices have earned her numerous awards, including the esteemed BEM. Ms Chacon's legacy as a compassionate healthcare professional and community advocate will continue to inspire others.

Pictured: The BEM was presented to Ms. Anndeloris Chacon by The Lord-Lieutenant of the City and County of Bristol, Mrs. Peaches Golding OBE, His Majesty's representative in the City and County. **Photo courtesy Anndeloris Chacon**

T&T ARTIST SARAH KNIGHTS COMMISSIONED TO PAINT PORTRAIT OF HM KING CHARLES III FOR TATLER MAGAZINE COVER

In the realm of royalty, His Majesty King Charles III wields a sceptre and crown, symbolizing his power and authority. On the other hand, Ms Sarah Knights, a talented artist hailing from Trinidad and Tobago, is carving her own enduring legacy, stroke by stroke, with her remarkable artwork.

Growing up in Sangre Grande, Ms. Knights discovered her profound passion for drawing and art at a tender age. This early revelation laid the groundwork for her future artistic endeavors. When the opportunity arose to create an awe-inspiring portrait of HM King Charles III, Knights enthusiastically embraced it. Tatler, a prestigious British fashion and lifestyle magazine, sought her artistic prowess for their July cover feature.

Remarkably, Ms. Knights' connection with Tatler was purely serendipitous, as she was discovered through her captivating social media posts showcasing her exceptional artwork. Despite gaining global attention and recognition, the talented artist remains resolute in her focus, dedicating herself solely to the creation of her exquisite art pieces.

Pictured: Ms. Sarah Knights. **Photo: TATLER**

As her brush dances across the canvas, Ms. Sarah Knights stands poised to share her artistic brilliance with a worldwide audience, capturing the essence of the recently coronated HM King Charles III through her brushstrokes.

"I am focusing just on my work, I have no time to focus on the international attention to be honest," Knights told Guardian Media yesterday.

"To be quite honest, once you're doing art you don't really have time for that you know."

For the past eight years, Ms. Knights has shared her passion for art with her students, employed as a visual arts teacher at Holy Faith Convent, Couva.

Knights considers herself to be a 'private' person and has not yet the shared news with her students, but hopes they will be encouraged to pursue their passions.

"This is how I view the education system when it comes to art. Of course, everyone says they care about art right, but I feel like art still gets pushed to the sidelines. I'm grateful we have a principal who sees the importance of it, I'm hoping the students themselves will see the importance of art and understand that art can get them various places," she said.

The British royal family elicits varied responses from the public, with some being captivated by the grandeur and ceremonial traditions, while others identify themselves as anti-monarchists. However, Ms Sarah Knights, stands apart from both these groups, as she remains impartial to the happenings of the royal realm. For Ms Knights, her decision to accept the commission was solely driven by her unwavering love for art. In this regard, she advocates for local artists to embrace their passion and pursue promising opportunities that life may present.

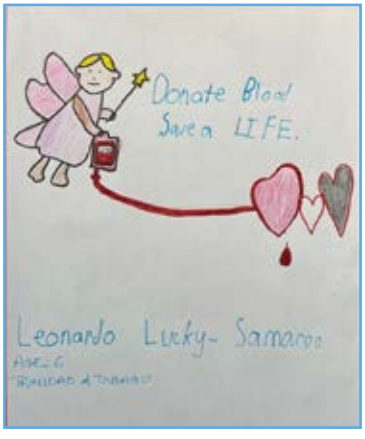
"With art being such a subjective thing you will face some type of critique. But you have to remember to be true to yourself," Ms Knights said.

Edited from https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/trini-artist-commissioned-to-do-king-charles-iii-portrait-6.2.1709905.4deca1c8c0

6-YEAR-OLD LEONARDO LUCKY-SAMAROO WINS GLOBAL ART COMPETITION FOR THALASSAEMIA AWARENESS

submitted by **ROMAINE MAHARAJ**

The United Kingdom Thalassaemia Society (UKTS), a registered organization with 45 years of operation in the UK, has played a significant role in positively impacting the lives of individuals living with thalassaemia major, an inherited and severe blood disorder. In response to the onset of the pandemic in 2020, UKTS launched a global art competition



Pictured: Winning entry submitted by Leonardo Lucky-Samaroo **Photo: United Kingdom Thalassaemia Society**

with the objective of raising awareness about thalassaemia and encouraging blood donations. Over the years, this competition has garnered widespread participation and recognition.

Now in its 4th year, the art competition has grown exponentially, with an impressive increase in the number of entries from across the globe. Initially receiving 293 submissions from 49 countries, the competition attracted a remarkable 1649 entries from 68 countries in 2023. The winners were recently announced on World Blood Donor Day.

One notable success story comes from Trinidad and Tobago, where Mr. Leonardo Lucky-Samaroo, a talented 6-year-old, participated and emerged victorious in the "Fantasy and Fairytales" category. UKTS commended Mr. Lucky-Samaroo for ingeniously incorporating the theme of "Fantasy and Fairytales" with the importance of blood donation in his artwork.

This annual competition has not only provided a platform for artists to showcase their talents but also serves as a means to inspire governments and nonprofit organizations to initiate similar campaigns aimed at raising awareness and bolstering blood stocks.

The UKTS team expressed their astonishment at the level of talent displayed in this year's submissions. They appreciated the courage exhibited by participants in creating personal and impactful art that highlights the cause. The team further expressed their enjoyment in reviewing all the entries and conveyed their desire to award prizes to every participant if possible.

To see other competition winners and learn more about the United Kingdom Thalassaemia Society, please visit: https://ukts.org/events/contest-winners/

DEBORAH LEE MATTHEWS SHORTLISTED FOR 2023 COMMONWEALTH SHORT STORY PRIZE

Trinidad and Tobago author Ms Deborah Lee Matthews has earned a place among the distinguished regional writers shortlisted for the esteemed 2023 Commonwealth Short Story Prize.

Her compelling story titled "*Teef from Teef*" stands among the five finalists announced on April 4th. The other shortlisted entries include "The Ovelias at Benzie Hill Dump" by Alexia Tolas (Bahamas), "Where The Winds Blow" by Cosmata Lindie (Guyana), "Road Trip and Fall" by Demoy Lindo (Jamaica), and "Ocoee'" by Kwame McPherson (Jamaica).

Having devoted almost two decades to cultural work in the theatre domain, Matthews brings her expertise to bear in her creative endeavors. As a current postgraduate student in Cultural Studies at the UWI St. Augustine, she skillfully employs creative expression as a potent tool to foster dialogues on lived experiences, community building, active resistance, and kinaesthetic memory.

Teef From Teef is a quintessentially Caribbean story about an impromptu mango-seeking adventure that takes place on a hot August day, which leads us on a young boy's journey to understanding his resilience.

The Commonwealth Short Story Prize, the world's most global literature prize, shortlisted twenty-eight exceptional stories, representing writers from 19 countries across the Commonwealth. These diverse entries address a wide range of subjects, including illness, human trafficking, decay, relationships, hope, family secrets, LGBTQ+ experiences in a challenging world, generation gaps, bittersweet friendships,

Pictured: Ms Deborah Lee Matthews. **Photo courtesy The Commonwealth Foundation**

and the complexities of work life. The stories span multiple genres, including speculative and comic fiction, historical fiction, and crime.

Annually, the Commonwealth Short Story Prize recognizes the best unpublished short fiction from any of the Commonwealth's 56 Member States. Mr. Kwame McPherson emerged as the winner, as announced during an online award ceremony on June 27th, presided by journalist Mr. Dionne Jackson Miller. The event featured the 2023 Chair of the judges, Pakistani writer Mr. Bilal Tanweer, along with this year's international judging panel, the five regional winners, and the 2022 #CWprize winner, Mr. Ntsika Kota.

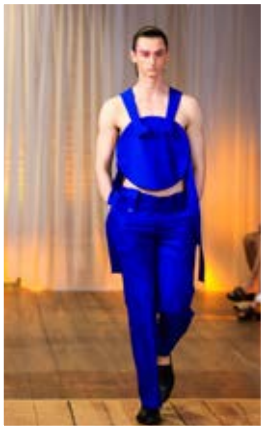
WATCH THE VIDEO | Listen to Deborah Lee Mathew's talk about their submission: https://youtu.be/8sCjAAjJFXQ

GEOFF K COOPER PRESENTS FRESH OFF THE BOAT AT LONDON FASHION WEEK

Trinidad and Tobago designer Mr. Geoff K. Cooper's latest Sagaboi SS24 collection, titled "Fresh Off The Boat," draws inspiration from the migration of people and the fusion of cultures in new spaces. The collection celebrates the Caribbean as a melting pot of cultures, offering fashion infused with energy, vibrant colors, prints, and unique manipulations that signify intermixing.

Pictured: Mr. Geoff K. Cooper. **Photo: Deborah Lee Matthews**

The term "Fresh Off The Boat," often a derogatory term for immigrants, gets redefined in Sagaboi's collection. Cooper presents arrivals as being freshly styled, walking with confidence and pride, challenging the notion of fear associated with entering new spaces. The brand's identity is deeply rooted in steel pan culture, evident in the collection's pieces, such as a steel pan vest and bomber jackets featuring distressed quilting and island stitchwork.



Cooper cleverly incorporates West Indian colloquial terms and vernacular on slogan tees, paying homage to the region's rich cultural heritage. Knitwear, handmade by female knitters from Caribbean fishing villages, showcases locally-sourced materials. The color palette is tropical, featuring vibrant blues, reds, yellows, and pastel tones, creating wardrobe staples and eye-catching stunners.

The collection's significance is heightened by the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush, which brought Caribbean immigrants and culture to the UK. Cooper commemorates this historic event by incorporating style elements from the era, giving them a modern twist.

In the spirit of collaboration, Sagaboi joins forces with the Museum of London to celebrate the museum's 20th anniversary and the Windrush's 75th. The collection also pays tribute to Indian indentured labourers who became part of Caribbean culture and eventually migrated to the UK.

Sagaboi's focus on sustainability and climate change is evident, with 75% of the collection using remnant fabrics and eco-yarns, addressing major challenges faced by the Caribbean region.

The core of the collection lies in its free-spirited exploration of personality through a multicultural lens, blending streetwear, leisurewear, and expressive tailoring. The brand, founded in 2015, draws inspiration from the Caribbean's diverse culture, history, and lifestyle, connecting it with global happenings and pop culture.

As the founder and creative director of Sagaboi, as well as the media platform Sagaman, Mr. Cooper showcases his multi-talented creative endeavors as a fashion editor, consultant, stylist, producer, and writer.

Overall, Sagaboi's SS24 collection is a celebration of diversity, culture, and interconnectedness, offering fashion that reflects the dynamic energy of the Caribbean and its impact on global fashion and society.

To read the full Loop TT article, please visit: https://bit.ly/43IY82k

Pictured: Models wearing a selection of the Sagaboi SS24 Collection. **Photos: Sagaboi Official**

SHAMSHU DEEN'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY: CONNECTING FAMILIES ACROSS CONTINENTS

Pictured: Mr. Shamshu Deen. **Photo: Shamshu Deen**

Mr. Shamshu Deen, a former teacher from Trinidad and Tobago, has earned a reputation for his remarkable efforts in assisting numerous families in tracing their ancestral roots back to India, and even reuniting them with long-lost relatives.

The journey began when Shamshu was just eight years old when his father showed him a map that ignited a deep curiosity about his family's history. The map depicted his family's ancestral land, which had been purchased by his great-great-grandfather in 1873 after immigrating to Trinidad from India. Intrigued by the map and inspired to learn more about his heritage, Shamshu embarked on a quest to discover information about his ancestors, particularly his great-great-grandfather, Munradin.

His pursuit led him to an obscure and reportedly snake-infested basement where records were stored pertaining to the indentured labour system that brought many Indians to Trinidad for work on sugar plantations. Hours of determined searching through dusty books of names finally yielded the significant discovery Shamshu sought the name of his great-great-grandfather, Munradin, etched in the records. Overwhelmed with emotion, he presented the document to his father, who was moved to tears. Motivated by this profound experience, Shamshu felt compelled to extend his assistance to others seeking information about their own ancestors. His dedication soon evolved into a mission to help these families reconnect with their distant relatives in India. His efforts went beyond Trinidad and Tobago, as he ventured to India to track down relatives for those seeking their roots. Among those he has successfully reunited with their families are two former prime ministers of Trinidad and Tobago, who were profoundly moved by the reunions.

For Shamshu, each new client represents a unique challenge with unpredictable outcomes, making his work all the more fascinating and rewarding. His passion for exploring and preserving familial histories has touched the lives of hundreds of families, leaving a lasting impact on their sense of identity and belonging.

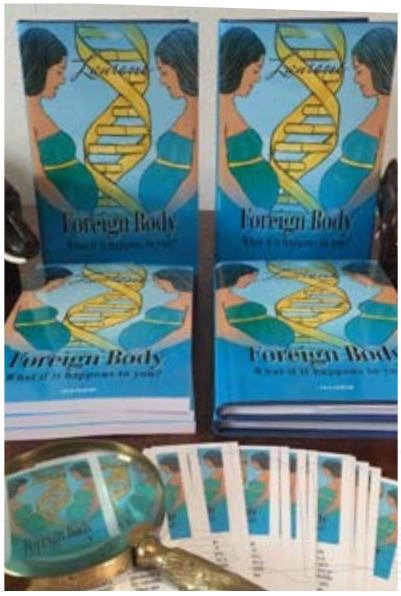
Through his dedication and compassionate efforts, Shamshu Deen continues to play a significant role in helping people discover and cherish their ancestral heritage.

Edited from https://bit.ly/3Dt8EAr

WATCH THE VIDEO | Listen to Shamshu's story the heartwarming reunions he has facilitated on BBC Outlook: https://bbc.in/3oqZ1OI

Writer's Corner

'FOREIGN BODY – WHAT IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU?' BY LAURENE



Laurene, a Trinibagonian British Poet, and Author and member of the Society of Authors, presents her debut novella, *"Foreign Body - What If It Happens To You?"* Published by Hansib Publications Ltd., the book is fact-based fiction and catalogues a tale where paternity is disputed.

Marcia's cryptic pregnancy produces a son for her apparently infertile husband, Marcus. They are delighted but Maria, the matriarch of the husband's family, has doubts and struggles to balance her religious beliefs with her tragic past. She harbours unbelievable secrets that disrupt her relationship with her family, especially with her son's wife.

Marcus, a self-assured man, is consumed by his mother's treatment of Marcia and abandons any interaction with conflict. His sister, Claudia, is resilient and accepts responsibility for dealing with all the family's problems while concealing her own anxieties.

Results from DNA tests only cause further confusion that reverberates within the medical establishment as well as in the family. The question is asked - "Who is the mother of this baby?" The events and family history also have ramifications for the doctor dealing with the exceptional situation, who becomes personally involved as the story builds to its climax.

Edited from https://www.lotsofloveandblessings.com

BEEKEEPING ADVOCATE FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SHINES AT UK FUNDRAISER

Mr. Gladstone Solomon, an accomplished professional with extensive experience in apiculture and a background in agriculture and rural development, visited the United Kingdom for a series of beekeeping-related events in 2023.

During his London visit, Mr. Solomon took part in the Bees for Development Bee Garden Party Fundraiser at Marlborough House on June 14, 2023. Bees for Development is a UK-based charity that empowers impoverished communities through sustainable beekeeping, providing them with a reliable income which also benefits biodiversity. At the event, Mr. Solomon promoted beekeeping in Trinidad and Tobago and showcased unique bee products to notable guests, including Her Majesty Queen Camilla (formerly HRH The Duchess of Cornwall) and representatives from the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago.

The High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago in London supported the cause by providing promotional items and banner displays at the Trinidad and Tobago booth.

As a generous contribution to the fundraiser, Mr. Solomon offered an auction item - a package with two return airline tickets from London to Tobago and a three-night stay at Tobago's Comfort Inns and Suites, which raised an impressive sum of two thousand and fifty pounds.

Following the fundraiser, Mr. Solomon also visited the Bees for Development International Head Office in Monmouth and the Wainwright Bee Farm and Honey Processing Facility in Aberystwyth, Western Wales. During his stay, he attended workshops on "Understanding Pesticides, Impact on Bees, and Mitigation Measures" facilitated by the Pesticide Action Network and "Establishing Beekeeping Centres of Excellence" organized by Bees for Development.

Pictured: 1) Mr. Gladstone Solomon featured a variety of beekeeping products and Trinidad and Tobago promotional merchandise, **2)** Ms. Jenny G. Thompson, Counsellor, Trinidad and Tobago High Commission and Mr. Gladstone Solomon, **3)** Stall visitors interacting with the pan display, **4)** Her Majesty The Queen Camilla speaking to Mr. Gladstone Solomon about his bee products, **Photo: Bees for Development, 5)** Melodians Steel Orchestra, **6)** Ms. Beverley Awonaya with models from the fashion show.

Bees for Development, founded in 1993, aims to alleviate poverty and build sustainable livelihoods by sharing beekeeping skills with impoverished communities worldwide, utilizing local resources and bee species.

The charity's patrons include notable figures such as Monty Don, Sting and Kate Humble, with Her Majesty The Queen Camilla serving as the President of Bees for Development.

Mr. Solomon's visit not only contributed to the noble cause of Bees for Development but also fostered knowledge exchange and collaboration within the global beekeeping community. By sharing his expertise and promoting beekeeping in Trinidad and Tobago, he played an essential role in advancing the organisation's mission of improving lives through bees.

JOB VACANCIES

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
AT ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

LECTURER IN LAW (Ref# 166-15 I; 166-11 L1)
Department: Law | Faculty: Law
https://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/details.asp?view=&id=2815
Deadline Date: Sunday, January 21, 2024

SENIOR LECTURER IN LAW (Ref#166-10 L1)
Department: Law | Faculty: Law
https://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/details.asp?view=&id=2816
Deadline Date: Sunday, January 21, 2024

LECTURER IN PUBLIC HEALTH (Ref# 187/13/67-1 I L1)
Department: Paraclinical Sciences | Faculty: Medical Sciences
https://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/details.asp?view=&id=2819
Deadline Date: Sunday, January 21, 2024

ASSISTANT MANAGER I (REF# 67/161 I L1)
Department: Procurement Unit
https://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/details.asp?view=&id=2812
Deadline Date: Thursday, January 28, 2024

LECTURER IN AGRI-FOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS (Ref# 164-74 I L1)
Department: Food Production | Faculty: Food and Agriculture
https://sta.uwi.edu/jobs/details.asp?view=&id=2822
Deadline Date: Sunday, February 11, 2024

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Detailed application and full curriculum vitae should be sent to the Campus Registrar, c/o HR Division (Appointments Section), Main Administration Building, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, W.I. via e-mail: STAHRApplications@sta.uwi.edu.

Three (3) referees (one of whom should be from your present organization) must be indicated. Application forms may be obtained at http://www.sta.uwi.edu in the Faculty & Staff, Staff Vacancies section. Further particulars including remuneration package may also be obtained at the above address. In order to expedite the appointment procedures, applicants are advised to ask their referees to send their **signed** references under **CONFIDENTIAL** cover **DIRECTLY** to the Campus Registrar at the above address without waiting to be contacted by the University. **Applications received after the deadline date will not be considered.**

WINDRUSH FOUNDATION HONORS SAM KING MBE: CELEBRATING A PIONEER'S REMARKABLE LEGACY

Above: Mr. John Richards (second from left), Director and Co-Founder Windrush Foundation, Mr. Arthur Torrington CBE (fourth from left) and Ms. Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary (far right) with guests. **At left:** Captivating Display: Mr. Sam King MBE Mural Showcased at Lambeth Town Hall. **Below:** Councillor Sarbaz Barznji, Mayor of Lambeth (centre) stand alongside Calypsonians Alexander D. Great and Tobago Crusoe.

On 19 June, 2023, the Windrush Foundation hosted a commemorative event at Lambeth Town Hall to honor the life and accomplishments of Windrush pioneer, Mr. Samuel B. King MBE. Mr. King, an ex-serviceman of the RAF during WWII, arrived in England aboard the MV Empire Windrush on 22 June, 1948. Notably, he played a pivotal role in organizing the first public celebration of Windrush Day in Brixton, London, on June 22, 1988, marking its 40th anniversary.

Mr. Samuel B. King MBE, in collaboration with Mr. Arthur Torrington CBE, established the Windrush Foundation as a charitable organization in 1996. The Foundation's primary focus is to commemorate Windrush Day annually, which was founded by the King on 22 June, 1948.

During the event, the MR. WINDRUSH, a story that pays tribute to the life and contributions of Mr. Sam King MBE written by Ms. Angela Cobbinah and Mr. Arthur Torrington CBE was launched. Distinguished individuals such as Councillor Sarbaz Barznji, Mayor of Lambeth, Mr. John Richards, Director and Co-Founder, Windrush Foundation; and other notable personalities such as Ms. Eliora McDonald, Mr. Samuel McDonald, Mr. Elijah McDonald, Ms. Nairobi Thompson, Ms. Almaz Teffera, Calypsonian Alexander D Great, Calypsonian Tobago Crusoe, and Mr. Arthur Torrington CBE, were among those who contributed to the programme.

Ms. Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary, High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago also attended.

The occasion offered an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable journey of Mr. Samuel B. King MBE, whose service and dedication left an indelible mark on the Windrush community and the broader historical landscape of the United Kingdom.

CARICOM HEADS OF MISSION PAY TRIBUTE AT WINDRUSH SQUARE

On 21 June, 2023, the CARICOM Caucus of Heads of Mission laid flowers at African Caribbean War Memorial, Windrush Square, Brixton in tribute to the Windrush Generation.

At right: Alexander D Great performing his calypso rendition of the song about the Windrush Generation, Trinidad and Tobago Floral tribute at African and Caribbean War Memorial in Windrush Square, Brixton layed by Ms Kimberly Ibrahim, Second Secretary, Trinidad and Tobago High Commission and the African and Caribbean War Memorial in Windrush Square, Brixton is decorated with all the flower tributes from various Caribbean High Commissions and notable figures. **Photos courtesy Jordan Craig and Belize High Commission, London**

WINDRUSH 75: A NATIONAL SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Top Left: Kudos Gospel Choir singing 'Total Praise' and 'Count Your Blessing' at the Windrush 75 National Service of Thanksgiving took place at Southwark Cathedral. **Photo: CTBI Media. Top Right:** The Windrush Generation display in Southwark Cathedral. **Photo: Eve Milner**

The Windrush 75 National Service of Thanksgiving took place on 22 June, 2023 at Southwark Cathedral in London, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the arrival of MV Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks. This historic event brought over 500 Caribbean men and women who responded to an invitation to assist Great Britain in its post-World War II recovery and in need of help from British subjects who were also Commonwealth citizens. Known as the Windrush generation, they played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural landscape of Britain. Arriving between 1948 and 1971, these individuals and their descendants have made invaluable contributions to our society.

The service comprised elements of worship, music, reflections, readings and prayers, touching upon relevant themes, such as the initial invitation extended to the Caribbean community, the challenges they faced upon acceptance, and the subsequent creative and significant contributions they have made to British society. This service of thanksgiving served the purpose of honoring the enduring legacy of the Windrush generation while providing a platform for younger voices to share how they are continuing to build upon this heritage. The occasion was an opportunity to celebrate their achievements, express gratitude for their contributions, and recognize the struggles they have encountered along the way.

Edited from https://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/worship-and-music/worship/services-calendar/windrush-75-a-national-service-of-thanksgiving/

CARIBBEAN TAKEOVER ENGAGES VISITORS AT THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

On 22 June, 2023, the National Maritime Museum hosted an enthralling 'Caribbean Takeover' event, organized by the Caribbean Social Forum (CSF). This event provided a unique opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the diverse cultures of Africa, the Caribbean and Britain.

Initiated by members of the Windrush Generation, the CSF sought to foster communication and combat isolation through educational talks, music, dance and more. Collaborating with talented artists, historians and performers, the CSF curated a day of vibrant events and celebrations that brought the museum to life.

Pictured: Januka Quadrille Dance Group dance presentation
Photo: National Maritime Museum

The event was part of the special Windrush 75 celebrations at the National Maritime Museum, commemorating 75 years since the arrival of the Empire Windrush in Britain. Working together with the Caribbean Social Forum, local schools, and young people, the museum celebrated Caribbean culture and the profound legacy of the Windrush generation in the UK.

Throughout the day, visitors enjoyed a wide range of engaging activities. Led by community choir directors Ms. Ethno Vox, a multi-school choir serenaded the audience with songs connected to Windrush and the Caribbean. Workshops designed to evoke personal memories of the Caribbean, inspired by the museum's collections, allowed families to explore their heritage and make connections.

Expert talks were also featured, with writer and researcher Ms. Veronica Mckenzie shedding light on the vessels that transported people from the Caribbean to the UK between 1942-62. Mr. Carlston Walters, Chairman of the Caribbean Family History Society, guided participants through the process of tracing their family history.

Baroness Floella Benjamin, a special guest speaker, shared her life journey and discussed her bestselling children's book, "Coming to England," which chronicled her experiences as a Windrush child arriving in England from Trinidad at the age of 10. Her book serves as a compelling testament to the triumph of courage and determination over adversity.

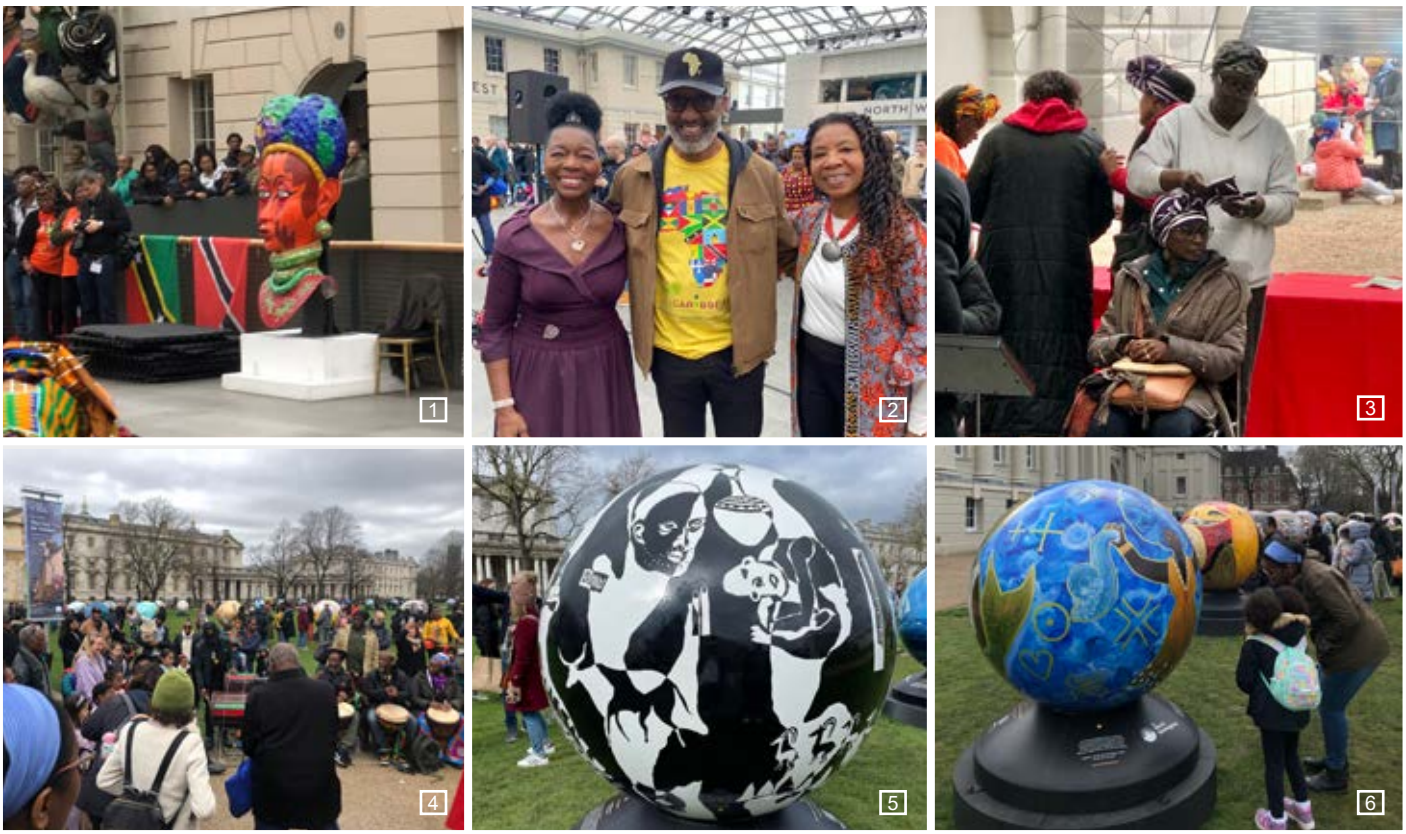
A visit to the Caird Library and Archive offered insight into migration from the Caribbean and details about the Empire Windrush. Attendees explored passenger lists and learned more about the historic voyage, with staff providing guidance on navigating the collections for personal research projects.

The event also provided opportunities for creative expression, including free workshops exploring the significance of poetry in discussions about racial justice, led by The World Reimagined team. Additionally, families and visitors engaged in lively Caribbean-style domino matches and immersive Calypso dance workshops, fully experiencing the vibrant cultural traditions.

A remarkable display of new portraits paid tribute to local community heroes, reflecting the diverse and vibrant community life in the Caribbean. Ms. Clary Salandy, Artistic Director of Mahogany Carnival Arts, led the family art workshops, and Calypsonian Alexander D. Great conducted the Calypso/Soca Songwriting workshops. Artist Carl Gabriel showcased his wire-bending sculptures alongside the portraits, further highlighting the richness of Caribbean community culture.

The 'Caribbean Takeover' at the National Maritime Museum was an extraordinary celebration of Caribbean culture and the enduring impact of the Windrush generation. Through lively performances, enriching workshops, and inspiring talks, visitors were transported on a captivating journey, fostering a deeper appreciation for the shared history and cultural connections between Africa, the Caribbean, and Great Britain.

Edited from https://bit.ly/CaribbeanTakeover2023



Pictured: 1) Artist Carl Gabriel's wire-bending sculpture on display, **2)** Dame Floella Benjamin DBE DL, Dr. Leroy Logan and Mr. Shirley Thompson OBE, **3)** African Headdresses workshop, **4)** African drumming and steelpan performances on the lawns of the National Maritime Museum, **5)** A globe artwork created by Trinidad and Tobago's Mr. Rodell Warner as part of his 'The World Reimagined' art series. **6)** 'The World Reimagined' - A series of thirty-six giant globes, each adorned with a unique artwork, were laid out across the lawns of the National Maritime Museum.

ALDWYN ROBERTS, 'LORD KITCHENER,' HONORED WITH BLUE PLAQUE

Above: Nubian Jak Community Trust Blue plaque unveiled for Mr. Aldwyn Roberts HBM DA professionally known as Lord Kitchener, **Photo: Trafford Council, 21 June 2023. At right:** Lord Kitchener. **Photo: Wikipedia**

The Empire Windrush's arrival at London's Tilbury docks has become symbolic of the Commonwealth citizens' generation that settled in Britain from 1948 to 1971. Among them was Mr. Aldwyn Roberts HBM DA professionally known as Lord Kitchener, a Trinidad and Tobago musician, who introduced British audiences to Caribbean culture with his calypsos. His records gained popularity, even catching the attention of Princess Margaret, who bought a hundred copies of his recordings for her friends. Lord Kitchener married Elsie Lines in 1953 and briefly owned a nightclub in Manchester while continuing to record songs. He celebrated Manchester United and Manchester City's sporting victories in calypsos. Eventually, he returned to Trinidad in 1962 and occasionally visited England for events like the Manchester Carnival and the birth of the Notting Hill carnival.

A blue plaque was unveiled on the 75th anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush arriving in the UK, outside the house where Lord Kitchener lived in Stretford.

The unveiling, arranged by Trafford Council's Local Studies department, took place outside 48 Brooks Road, Stretford where Lord Kitchener lived from 1957-62 with his first wife, Elsie.

Speaking at the ceremony was poet Dr. Anthony Joseph, fictional biographer of Lord Kitchener and the 2022 winner of the TS Eliot poetry prize. Also speaking was poet Doretta Maynard, Dr. Ken McIntyre who spoke about Lord Kitchener's life in England and Trafford Mayor Dolores O'Sullivan.

Present at the ceremony was the first Black mayor of Trafford, Mr. Whit Stennett MBE, Councillor Tom Ross, Leader of Trafford Council, Councillor Dolores O'Sullivan; Mayor of Trafford and many Trafford community group members. A musical performance on the steel pan was provided by Mr. Ronnie 'General' Walfall.

Cllr. Ross said:

"Lord Kitchener was a great entertainer who brought life to Manchester. He brought calypso music to the UK, as well as owning nightclubs.

"He is a great example of how the Windrush generation have contributed to the UK society, so it was fitting that we unveiled a blue plaque in his honour on the 75th anniversary of the Windrush's arrival.

"It was a privilege to be at the unveiling where we could honour a musical legend of Trafford and Trinidad."

After the unveiling, Mr. Joseph gave a talk on his research into Lord Kitchener at the Limelight centre in Old Trafford.

Edited from https://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/news/articles/2023/20230621-Music-legend-honoured-in-Trafford-for-Windrush-Day.aspx

Picutred: 1) Mr. Ronnie 'General' Walfall Steel pan performance, **2)** Councillor Dolores O'Sullivan, Mayor of Trafford welcomed attendees to the ceremony, **3)** Dr. Anthony Joseph talked about Lord Kitchener's life, and shared excerpts from his book *'Kitch: A Fictional Biography of a Calypso Icon'*, **4)** Blue Heritage Plaque for Lord Kitchener officially unveiled to the people of Trafford at 48 Brooks Road, Stretford M16 9QR. **Photo: Trafford Council, 21 June 2023**

BARKING TOWN SQUARE COMES ALIVE WITH THE BARKING & DAGENHAM CARNIVAL

1) Dame Lorraine, **2)** Fancy sailors, **3)** Moko jumbies, **Photos: Joseph Young | Trinis in London, 4**) Merfolk revellers, **Photo: Callaloo Carnival Arts UK 5)** Kingsdale Foundation School Steelband, **6)** Carnival mask and headpiece workshops for children, **Photos: Joseph Okechukwu, 7)** Councillor Donna Lumsden, Mayor of Barking and Dagenham, alongside Soca artist Triniboi Joocie, who performed at the Barking and Dagenham Carnival 2023, **Photo: Joseph Young | Trinis in London**

The Barking and Dagenham Carnival took place in Barking town square on Saturday 8 July, 2023. This annual event, organised by UKON Careers since its inception in 2014, remains committed to fostering inclusivity and family-oriented entertainment while encouraging the active participation of people of all ages, including those with disabilities.

The carnival presented a vibrant display of global carnival traditions. Attendees were treated to mesmerizing steelpan performances, live soca music, and captivating dance routines, courtesy of both local and international artists. The programme also featured enthralling African drumming and engaging carnival craft workshops. Local businesses contributed to the festive atmosphere, with various food trucks and stalls offering diverse culinary delights.

In anticipation of this year's carnival, the organizing team shared their enthusiasm. Ms Ros Alexander, Director of UKON, expressed excitement about the event's growth and the incorporation of international carnival elements, such as Dame Lorraine and Moko Jumbies.

Monae, a young apprentice studying Business and Administration Level 3, eagerly looked forward to bringing people and families together for an exuberant celebration of cultural diversity. She described it as an opportunity for the community to revel in the vibrant atmosphere, don colorful attire, and enjoy the carnival cuisine.

Similarly, Tia, another young apprentice in Business Administration Level 3, was thrilled about witnessing the Barking and Dagenham community come together during the summer carnival. She expressed joy in witnessing families enjoying themselves with smiles on their faces.

Notably, the event featured the talents of Tracey Sankar-Charleau, who traveled from Trinidad and Tobago to perform at the carnival. Her performance received a warm reception from the diverse audience, contributing to raising the profile of Trinidad and Tobago.

Looking ahead, next year's Barking and Dagenham Carnival is scheduled for Saturday, 13th July 2024, promising even more festivities and community engagement as they celebrate its 10-year anniversary.

UKON is seeking volunteers to lend their assistance to this event. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact: info@ukoncareers.com.

Edited from https://socanews.com/news/barking-dagenham-carnival/

Picutred: Mr. Shabaka Thompson addressing the On Route Carnival Conference, June 2003.
Photo: Angela Duncan-Thompson

REMEMBERING CULTURAL LEADER VERNON SHABAKA THOMPSON (1957 – 2023)

written by **ANGELA DUNCAN-THOMPSON**

Mr. Vernon Thompson, popularly known as 'Shabaka', was a Cultural Leader with extensive experience in carnival, theatre, event management and production, working over three (3) decades in Canada, Trinidad, the United Kingdom and Africa. Up to the time of his transition, Shabaka was an Executive Director with Zmirage UK and an Artisan Consultant and Entrepreneur with De CORE Ltd., UK. He was an ardent carnival practitioner producing costumes for Notting Hill, Nottingham, Calabar (Nigeria) and Trinidad carnivals.

Together with Ashton Moore (aka The Mighty Tiger), Shabaka was instrumental in initiating the London Calypso Tent in partnership with the Association of British Calypsonians in 1992 (now ACASA). In 2004, he received an Arts Council Fellowship Award for a two month study of the Miami Carnival and in 2005 he became the Acting CEO of the London Notting Hill Carnival.

As the Director of London's leading African Combined Arts Centre, the Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre (London), Shabaka initiated and realised the Carnival Village project for the development and sustenance of Carnival Art in London and all its related industries, a project of which he was the initial Chief Executive.

Shabaka lectured in schools, colleges and universities, conducted Theatre in Education (TIE) workshops in primary and secondary schools across the United Kingdom, and presented papers at national and international Carnival Arts conferences. His theatre involvement included acting and directing, in various countries. Shabaka was in the process of completing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Carnival Arts Studies, having previously attained his Master of Arts in Carnival Studies, both at The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT).

Shabaka's ultimate vision was to contribute to the economic liberation of African people through empowerment, leadership, and the development of sustainable institutions and communities.

Shabaka is survived by his wife Angela, son Oba, mother Elise, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and extended family members.

HIDDEN GEMS' EXHIBITION: CELEBRATING TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S LANDSCAPES

Above: Artist Nishad Karim addressing attendees at the reception and private viewing of 'Hidden Gems' Art Exhibition.
Artwork: Landscape painting by Nishad Karim titled 'Parlatuvier Sunset Tobago'.

On 26 July, 2023, the High Commission for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago welcomed art enthusiasts and the general public to the captivating exhibition titled 'Hidden Gems.' Showcasing the splendid landscape paintings of local artist Nishad Karim, the exhibition provided a unique opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the natural wonders of the Trinidad and Tobago.

Nishad, born in Trinidad and Tobago, unearthed his artistic passion amidst the scenic beauty of the twin island nation. Influenced by his creative parents, he initially pursued technical drawing. His education at Teachers' College and the University of the West Indies honed

his skills, earning him First Class Honours. Relocating to the UK in 2008, he became an Art Coordinator, guiding students to scholarships through impactful projects and master classes. Nishad's journey is fueled by boundless passion and curiosity, shaping him into the artist he is today.

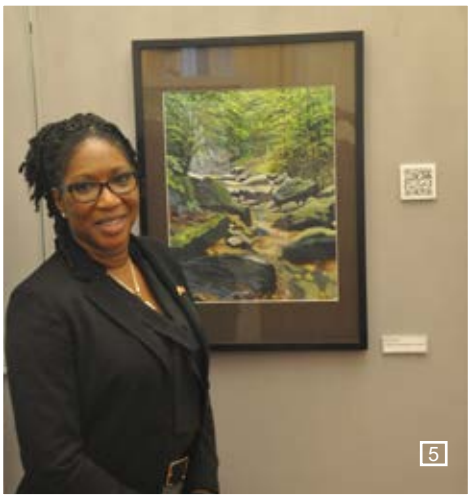
Nishad shared that the inspiration for this exhibition stemmed from the lockdown period, during which he sought to rekindle connections between people and the iconic landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago. His paintings depicted scenes such as Tobago's waterwheels, Caroni Bird Sanctuary, cocoa houses in Santa Cruz and the vibrant Poui flowers on the Northern Range, evoking nostalgia and joy.

In a world grappling with mental health challenges, Nishad's art acted as a source of comfort, enabling individuals to reminisce about cherished memories. His work emphasized the importance of preserving cultural heritage; anchoring individuals in their roots.

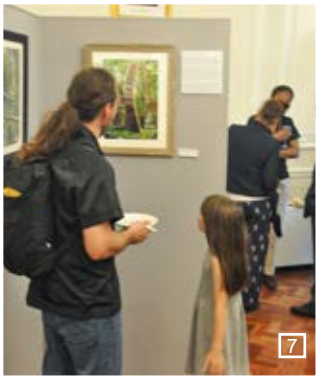
Artwork: Landscape painting titled 'Cathedral Rock Paria Beach' by Nishad Karim

In his artist statement, Nishad elaborated on his creative approach, aiming to convey a sense of presence and enjoyment to the viewers. Through his artwork, he captured the intricate play of light, form, colour, and mood found in nature, captivating the audience with the beauty of Trinidad and Tobago's landscapes.

'Hidden Gems' illuminated the importance of art in our lives, celebrating the treasures of Trinidad and Tobago and emphasizing the role of cultural preservation in fostering unity within society. These initiatives are pivotal in honouring our heritage for the benefit of future generations. High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul reaffirmed the Mission's commitment to supporting individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting Trinidad and Tobago's rich cultural legacy.



Pictured: 1) High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul delivered welcome remarks to the art exhibition, **2)** Mr. Raphael Ramcharitar, Mr. Gerald Ramcharitar and Mr. Andrew Ramroop OBE CMTT, **3)** Dr. Natalie Johnson, Mr. Ansel Wong CBE and Ms Angela Cox, **4)** Mr. Nishad Karim speaking with guests, **5)** Mrs. Carol Valentine-Heath, Security Attaché.



6-9) Specially invited guests enjoying the Hidden Gems art exhibition opening evening. **10)** Mrs. Salina Hosien Karim, Mrs. Beverley Awonaya, Mr. Nisha Karim and Mr. Dexter Marchan.

TRINIDAD&TOBAGO

CONDOR RESUMES DIRECT AIRLIFT BETWEEN GERMANY AND TOBAGO FOR WINTER 2023

Following up on negotiations with longstanding airline partner Condor over the past few months, the Tobago Tourism Agency Limited announced the resumption of direct airlift between Germany and Tobago for Winter 2023/2024.

Condor will be operating a weekly flight on Tuesdays between the Frankfurt Airport in Germany and the ANR Robinson International Airport in Tobago, commencing on 7 November, 2023 and ending on April 09, 2024. All flights will be on the brand new A330-900neo, and will be available for booking from May 01, 2023.

Commenting on the exciting news for Tobago, TTAL Executive Chairman Alicia Edwards stated:

"We are absolutely delighted to welcome Condor Airlines back to Tobago as we seek to make it even easier for our German visitors to access and experience everything our unspoilt island has to offer. The return of this flight acknowledges the relevance of the destination for the German-speaking market and paves the way for us to initiate accelerated marketing plans."

Pictured: Mr. Christopher James, Ex Officio Member of TTAL's Board, THA Chief Secretary Farley Augustine, Mr. Oliver Feess, Senior Manager Network Planning at Condor Councillor Tashia Burris, Secretary of Tourism, Culture and Transportation, and Alicia Edwards, TTAL Executive Chairman. **Photo: THA**

THA Chief Secretary Farley Augustine shakes hands with Oliver Feess, Senior Manager Network Planning at Condor (second from left) after a meeting between Tobago's tourism officials and Condor at ITB 2023. Looking on [from left to right] are Christopher James, Ex Officio Member of TTAL's Board; Councillor Tashia Burris, Secretary of Tourism, Culture and Transportation; and Alicia Edwards, TTAL Executive Chairman.

Tobago's overseas destination representative in Germany, Ms. Angelika Wegner of Tourimax added:

"The weekly flight service from Frankfurt will not only cater for the continued demand among German-speaking customers in Tobago, but will also support the vast marketing activities of the Tobago Tourism Agency in its strategy to expand share in and increase arrival numbers from its second main source market."

For more information on Condor flights and other connectivity options to Tobago, visit www.tobagobeyond.com

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WINS GOLD AT CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

Above: Trinidad and Tobago presentation "This Our Native Land", **Top right:** T&T delegation Mr. Anthony Tang Kai, Mr. Shane Valentine, Ms Melissa Lee Foon and Mr. Andre Crawford holds the gold medal for their presentation, **Bottom:** Photo tribute to Mr. Bernard Beckles.

Trinidad and Tobago has achieved an outstanding victory at the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society 2023 Chelsea Flower Show in London, earning a well-deserved gold medal for their breathtaking presentation titled 'This Our Native Land.' The event, held annually at the Royal Hospital grounds in Chelsea, took place from 23 May to 27 May, 2023.

The win is a testament to the team's hard work and dedication, as expressed by team leader Mr. Tony Tang Kai, who emphasized the importance of perseverance and commitment in achieving success.

However, the triumph was bittersweet, marked by the sudden passing of Mr. Bernard Beckles, the team's design lead, on 3 May, 2023. In honor of Beckles, floral designer Mr. Shane Valentine, his protégé, took up the mantle as lead designer. Mr. Valentine worked alongside Beckles at La Tropicale Flower Shop in St. James.

"It was a bit daunting at first," he said in the release. *"But it was Bernard who transformed me from being an ordinary worker in the back to being independent and bold enough to execute my ideas."*

Mr. Valentine reached out to Tobago floral artist Ms. Neave McKenzie to join the team for the London campaign, *"I know his ideas and we work well together."*

The team arrived in London with more than 50 boxes of plant material on 17 May, 2023.

At the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, Mr. Valentine and Ms. McKenzie worked hand in hand with Mr. Tony Tang Kai, Ms. Melissa Lee Foon, Mr. Andre Crawford, and Ms. Simone Taylor, determined to fulfill Beckles's desire to complete a hat-trick of gold medals, starting from their previous victories with 'Cazabon' in 2013 and 'Rhythms of A People' in 2019.

Mr. Tang Kai was relieved at the result and admitted to feeling emotional as he thought about his friend and colleague Mr. Beckles.

"Bernard would have been so proud of us, and especially of the younger members of the team who worked so hard for this gold medal. This is for him." he said.

"We've been heartened by the congratulatory messages from Trinis everywhere. We're also sharing this moment with our Caribbean neighbours Barbados and Grenada, who are also taking home gold medals."

Tang Kai said the team is grateful to all those who assisted and supported this campaign to Chelsea.

"It wasn't easy getting here this year, but we are glad we persevered. We look forward to saying thanks in person to all who helped in some way, shape or form. We're happy to have done the country proud."

Up to 200,000 people visited the Chelsea Flower Show before it closed on 27 May, 2023.

Edited from http://tt.loopnews.com/content/tt-wins-gold-chelsea-flower-show-2023

For more photos of RHS Chelsea FLower Show photos, please turn to page 49.

TOBAGO COCOA ESTATE LAURA 45% DARK MILK WAS AWARDED EUROPEAN BRONZE

Pictured: Tobago Cocoa Estate's Laura 45% Dark Milk and Cocoa Pods from Tobago Cocoa Estate in Roxborough, Tobago.

Photos: Tobago Cocoa Estate

Tobago Cocoa Estate's Laura 45% Dark Milk has achieved yet another prestigious accolade by securing the Bronze award in the category of Micro-Batch Plain/origin chocolate bars at the European Finals of the International Chocolate Awards. The finals took place on Saturday, 27 May, 2023 in Valencia, Spain.

Following their success, Tobago Cocoa Estate joyfully celebrated their achievement on social media. The estate expressed their elation on Facebook, sharing the news of their Laura 45% Dark Milk's achievement and its qualification for the World Grand Finals scheduled for November 2023. Grateful for the acknowledgment by the judges at the International Chocolate Awards (ICA), the Tobago Cocoa Estate expressed their honor to be part of such a competitive event.

The International Chocolate Awards, founded in 2012 and organized by International Institute of Chocolate and Cacao Tasting with global partners, are renowned as the leading independent competition for fine chocolate. These prestigious awards recognize excellence in crafting superior chocolates and products, carefully made with top-quality ingredients. A distinguished panel of chocolate experts, chefs, and patissiers conduct blind tastings to evaluate flavor, craftsmanship, and the use of premium components.

TOURISM TRINIDAD SHINES AT GLOBAL BIRD FAIR, SHOWCASING BIRDING PARADISE

Pictured: 1) (L-R) Mr. Allister Nanan, Winston Nanan's Caroni Bird Sanctuary Tours, Ms Rachael Nathaniel, Sales and Reservations Manager, HADCO Experiences and Ms Wendy Lake, International Promotions Specialist, Tourism Trinidad at the Trinidad booth in Global Bird Fair. **2-3)** Engaged participants interacting with the booth at the Global Bird Fair. **Photos: Tourism Trinidad**

Tourism Trinidad had a successful showing at the Global Bird Fair held from July 14 to 16, 2023, at Rutland Showground in Oakham, United Kingdom. The fair showcased leading conservationists, adventurers, scientists, wildlife filmmakers, and authors, who delivered lectures and presentations on bird conservation efforts worldwide. Last year, the Global Bird Fair managed to raise approximately £85,000 for bird conservation.

During the three-day event, participants engaged in workshops, panels, and discussions covering critical topics such as the biodiversity crisis, habitat destruction, and the protection of declining bird species.

Trinidad and Tobago play a crucial role in supporting diverse bird species. The nation is especially known for the Scarlet Ibis, its national bird, which was recently designated as an "Environmentally Sensitive Species." Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago boast two endemic species, namely the Trinidad Piping Guan (or Pawi) and the Trinidad Mot Mot. Moreover, the islands are home to the world's only cave-dwelling, nocturnal fruit-eating bird, the Oilbird.

The twin-island nation hosts more than 470 species of birds, including tropical

residents and winter migrants from North America, Europe, the Arctic, and South America. Notable birding areas in Trinidad include Yerette's, Caroni Bird Sanctuary, Nariva Swamp, Asa Wright Nature Centre, Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust, Blanchisseuse Road, and Grande Riviere.

Participating in the Global Bird Fair was an essential opportunity for Tourism Trinidad to promote Destination Trinidad as a premier birding destination and forge connections with birding magazines, associations, and enthusiasts, strengthening collaborative efforts for bird conservation and sustainable tourism practices.

POET RONALDO MOHAMMED REPRESENTS T&T AT PARIS POETRY MARKET

The vibrant poetry scene of Trinidad and Tobago has won international recognition as writer Mr. Ronaldo Mohammed was chosen to represent the country from 7-11 June, 2023 at the 40th edition of the Poetry Market (Marché de la Poésie) in Paris, France.

Mr. Mohammed was one of ten exceptional emerging poets selected to showcase their work at the highly-anticipated literary event. The cohort stood out from 252 applications from hopefuls vying for a chance to participate in the programme. Notably, for the first time, the Caribbean region was honored as a guest of honour at the Poetry Market, thanks to a significant alliance with the Transcultura program, according to a media release.

The event followed a call for young poets from the Caribbean, 18-35 years, initiated under the auspices of the UNESCO programme Transcultura: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean, and the European Union through Culture and Creativity. which is funded by the European Union. As part of this opportunity, the poets were also featured in a special supplement

Above: Mr. Ronaldo Mohammed. **Photo: Ronaldo Mohammed**

of the Market of letters (Marché des lettres), a prominent publication of the event, which served as a testament to the rich literary talent emerging from the Caribbean.

Mr. Mohammed, a gifted poet and teaching artist, draws inspiration from the culture, folklore, and local dialect of Trinidad and Tobago to shed light on pressing societal issues, including crime, youth violence, gender-based violence, and the challenges faced by Venezuelan migrants in the country. His distinctive approach was evident during his performances at this year's First Citizens National Poetry Slam, which was the closing event of the 2023 NGC Bocas Lit Fest.

Expressing his pride in representing Trinidad and Tobago at this prestigious literary event in Europe, Mr. Mohammed shared, *"Through this opportunity, I was able to present my first-ever chapbook of poems, 'What Happens at the Edge of the World,' which highlights the untold stories of people who have faced and overcome the harsh realities of life in Trinidad and Tobago society."* This significant achievement affirms his status as a rising star in the world of poetry.

The Poetry Market is an annual event that provides young Caribbean poets with a unique platform to expand their professional horizons, establish connections with influential figures in the European literary scene, and strengthen their networks. At the heart of Paris, the Place Saint-Sulpice proudly featured a dedicated stand promoting the works of these talented poets.

Edited from https://newsday.co.tt/2023/06/16/poet-represents-trinidad-and-tobago-in-paris-poetry-market/

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRIUMPH AT 2023 WORLD GAMES

The Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics team achieved remarkable success at the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, Germany, bringing home a total of 20 medals. These accolades comprised seven gold medals, five silver medals, and eight bronze medals, with additional achievements including two fourth-place, four sixth-place and six eighth-place ribbons earned during the tournament.

Pictured: Captivating Moments at the 2023 Special Olympics World Games Opening Ceremony. **Photo: Special Olympics**

One standout performance was by 15-year-old athlete Mr. Cadell Cuffy, who secured a bronze medal in the men's Level A M-Final, completing the event in an impressive 53.12 seconds. The team's triumphant return took place on 27 June 2023, where they were warmly welcomed and hosted by the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe MP, Minister of Sport and Community Development.

Minister Cudjoe expressed immense pride in the team's efforts and achievements, applauding the profound impact their performances had on both local and international sporting arenas. The Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago Delegation achieved success in various disciplines, including track and field, swimming and open water, equestrian sport and powerlifting.

The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe MP, Minister of Sport and Community Development, extended heartfelt congratulations to the Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics athletes for their exceptional performance at the Special Olympics International 2023 World Summer Games in Berlin.

Pictured: The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe MP, Minister of Sport and Community Development welcomed the Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago Delegation as they returned home after an outstanding performance at the Special Olympics International 2023 World Summer Games. **Photo: Ministry of Sport and Community Development**

Edited from https://tt.loopnews.com/content/20-medals-tt-2023-special-olympics-world-games

FASHIONTT CHAMPIONS TRADE MISSIONS TO FASHION CAPITALS

written by **FASHION TT**

The Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company (FashionTT) has achieved a remarkable feat by leading ten of the nation's finest designers on a trade mission to New York City and the United Kingdom. In line with its mission to bolster the export potential of the country's local designers, FashionTT, under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, orchestrated two trade missions to these illustrious fashion capitals. The resounding success of these missions reflects the designers' extraordinary talent and creativity, leaving an unforgettable impression in the highly competitive global markets.

The Fashion Trade Mission commenced in New York City from the 12th to the 16th of June, 2023, followed by an equally impactful endeavour in the United Kingdom from the 12th to the 15th of July, 2023. The United Kingdom Trade Mission was conducted in collaboration with exporTT Ltd., facilitated through its Export Booster Initiative (EBI), and ensured that the designers were impeccably prepared for these momentous opportunities.

Pictured: (second from left) Meiling founder of Meiling, Mr. Robert Young founder of The Cloth, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, Mr. Sebastien 'Bas' Gibert co-founder of The Hideout Clothing, Ms. Lisa Marie Daniel, General Manager, FashionTT, Ms. Aisha Stewart, Project Lead FashionTT and Mr. Geoff K. Cooper founder of Sagaboy with guest. **Photo: FashionTT**

Over the course of these missions, the designers engaged in over 40 discerning business-to-business meetings, fostering meaningful connections with esteemed retailers, boutique owners, influential online stores, trendsetting influencers, and renowned stylists. The establishments that met with the designers include but are not limited to, Liberty, Net A Porter, Browns Fashion, The Place London, Cult Mia, Brooklyn Circus, Kifth, Dem Nation, SSNSE, and Nordstrom. The impact of these engagements has been significant as several designers are currently pursuing promising leads and orders that

originated from these encounters.

The distinguished designers chosen to partake in this initiative represent the pinnacle of the Value Chain Investment Programme (VCIP) and are recognized as the Global Value Chain designers. This cohort includes prominent names such as Ecliff Elie, Meiling, The Cloth, J. Angelique, The Hideout Clothing, Charu Lochan Dass, Heather Jones International, Genesis Swimwear, 1ndividual Aesthetic, and Neha Karina.

Ms. Lisa-Marie Daniel, FashionTT's General Manager expressed deep appreciation and pride for the designers' exceptional achievements, stating, "These successful fashion trade missions mark a significant milestone for our vibrant fashion industry in Trinidad and Tobago. Our talented designers have magnificently showcased their creativity and craftsmanship on the global stage, leaving an indelible impression in the fiercely competitive markets of New York and the United Kingdom. Through FashionTT's unwavering commitment and the wholehearted support of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, we have empowered our top-tier local designers to forge meaningful connections with prestigious retailers, influential boutiques, and key buyers, opening doors for potential collaborations and new orders. The passion and dedication of our designers have truly shone throughout the 40+ astute business-to-business meetings, fostering promising leads and abundant opportunities for our fashion community to flourish. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to exporTT Ltd. and the EXIMBANK for their invaluable contribution in ensuring our designers were impeccably prepared to seize every moment. This is just the beginning of a remarkable journey, and together, we will continue to elevate Trinidad and Tobago's fashion excellence to unparalleled heights on the global stage."

To keep up-to-date in what's happening with FashionTT, follow the Facebook and Instagram pages: @fashionoftt.

Above: Designer Meiling speaking with visitors, **Below:** Fashion TT Pop Up showcased the top designers at 26 Pall Mall, London. **Photo: FashionTT**

EVENTS ROUND UP

MADAM TRINITY ART INSTALLATION AT T&T HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON

The High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago in London commissioned artist Ms. Karla Cornwall to create an Avatar for the 60th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. We are pleased to inform you that this art installation has been successfully completed and is now permanently displayed in the High Commission's foyer for public viewing.

ABOUT MADAM TRINITY

Madam Trinity, The Hummingbird, is a captivating abstract avatar representing Trinidad and Tobago's cultural heritage. Standing gracefully at 6'2", she embodies the nation's flag colors of red, white, and black through intricate threads, fabrics, synthetic wools, and embellishments. Her poised stance, reminiscent of the native Hummingbird, exudes delicacy and grace. Madam Trinity's intricate details can be admired from various angles, offering diverse perspectives. The addition of "Trinity" in her name, derived from "Holy Trinity," signifies Trinidad. Sixty feathered wool plaits drape from her arms, symbolizing 60 years of independence. Her vibrant base represents the nation's carnival history with holographic silver, evoking a kaleidoscope of colors.

COURTESY CALL BY SENATOR HASSEL BACCHUS MINISTER OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to global digital progress was spotlighted as Senator Hassel Bacchus, Minister of Digital Transformation, and iGovTT CEO Inshan Meahjohn, joined a high-level delegation at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) Barcelona 2023 that took place from 27 February, to 2 March, 2023. The MWC served as a vital platform for networking and advancing connectivity.

Prior to this, Minister Bacchus participated in the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) Ministerial Alliance held from 20-21 February, 2023 in London. During the event he shared insights and challenges pertinent to the achievement of Universal Broadband Connectivity and interacted with the UK's Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Mr. Paul Scully, and fellow Ministers from nations such as Turks and Caicos and Montserrat.

Minister Bacchus and Ms. Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds, Ministry of Digital Transformation met High Commissioner Vishnu Dhanpaul, and discussed Trinidad and Tobago's dedication to digital progress and global alliances.

Top: Ms. Rasheda Morton, IT Manager, Ms. Beverley Awonaya, Senator Hassel Bacchus, Minister of Digital Transformation, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, Mrs. Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds, Ministry of Digital Transformation, Ms. Jenny G. Thompson, Consellor.

At right: Minister Bacchus delivering a presentation at the Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations 2023, **Photo: Ministry of Digital Transformation TT**

CUBING TRIUMPH: ZEKE SIRJU SETS NEW T&T NATIONAL RECORD AT WCA COMPETITION

Pictured: Mr. Zeke Sirju participating at the WCA Competition in Stevenage. **Photo: Zeke Sirju**

Mr. Zeke Sirju, a 13-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago, set a new national record for the 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube at the World Cube Association (WCA) competition in Stevenage, England. His average time for five solves was 14.55 seconds, with a best time of 11.48 seconds. Despite being a form four student, he ranked 67th out of 174 competitors in the second round, advancing to the semi-finals in only his second competition.

Mr. Sirju discovered cubing as a hobby during the first COVID-19 lockdown over three years ago. Initially solving the Rubik's Cube to pass the time, he rapidly progressed from two-and-a-half minutes to 35 seconds. Even after the pandemic, while continuing with school, his dedication led to further improvement, achieving a remarkable 14-second solve time.

In 2022, he debuted at the WCA Stevenage Spring competition, participating in five categories. This year, Sirju surpassed his previous records in all categories and reclaimed the national record for 3x3x3. Additionally, he competed in two more categories: 3x3x3 one-handed solve and Square-1. Looking forward, he aims to consistently achieve solve times under 10 seconds, inspired by the world record of 3.13 seconds set by Mr. Max Park in July 2023.

WORLD STEELPAN DAY CELEBRATIONS AT THE HIGH COMMISSION

1) Ms. Jenny G. Thompson, then Acting High Commissioner celebrating with members of the public, **2)** Mr. Dexter Marchan, Mr. Sterling Betancourt MBE and Mrs. Annette Donald Wilmott, **3)** High Commission staff members and passersby gather to savor the mesmerising steelpan performance outside the High Commission, **4)** Trinidad and Tobago High Commission staff members with Mr. Dexter Marchan (fourth from left) and Mr. Sterling Betancourt MBE (seventh from left), **5)** Mr. Lawson Lovell, Ms. Jenny G. Thompson, then Acting High Commissioner, and Ms. Beverley Awonaya stand beside the commemorative World Steelpan Day banner.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT), requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to proclaim *August 11* as *World Steelpan Day* annually from 2023. On July 24, 2023, the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution for August 11 to be declared *World Steelpan Day* to be observed annually in the United Nation's calendar. In furtherance of the United Nations' acknowledgment that the steelpan "promotes inclusive societies, sustainable communities and the creative economy and can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being, gender equality and youth empowerment".

The High Commission honoured this historic day, by paying tribute to our steelpan pioneers who toiled and paved the way for the accomplishment of this milestone achievement in the development of the steelpan in our Nation's history, as well as celebrate our nation's current pannists, by installing a banner on the Chancery railing from August 10, 2023 to August 11, 2023.

Pannist, Mr. Dexter Marchan, played a medley of old time favourites, patriotic songs and classics on the steps of the High Commission.

Most notably, Mr. Sterling Betancourt MBE, renowned pan pioneer, arranger and musician played a significant role on the day. Mr. Betancourt is the last surviving member of Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO). This band gave its historic first performance at the Festival of Britain on London's South Bank exhibition grounds. The group was the first steelband to travel abroad from Trinidad and Tobago presenting the newly invented steelpan to an international audience.

High Commissioner Dhanpaul has promised that the festivities to celebrate World Steelpan Day 2024 will be much bigger and better.

RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2023
Continued

A cross section of photos of the amazing garden designs and gorgeous floral displays from various organisations at the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show which took place from Monday 22 May to Saturday 27 May, 2023 in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

A PUBLICATION OF THE HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, LONDON
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